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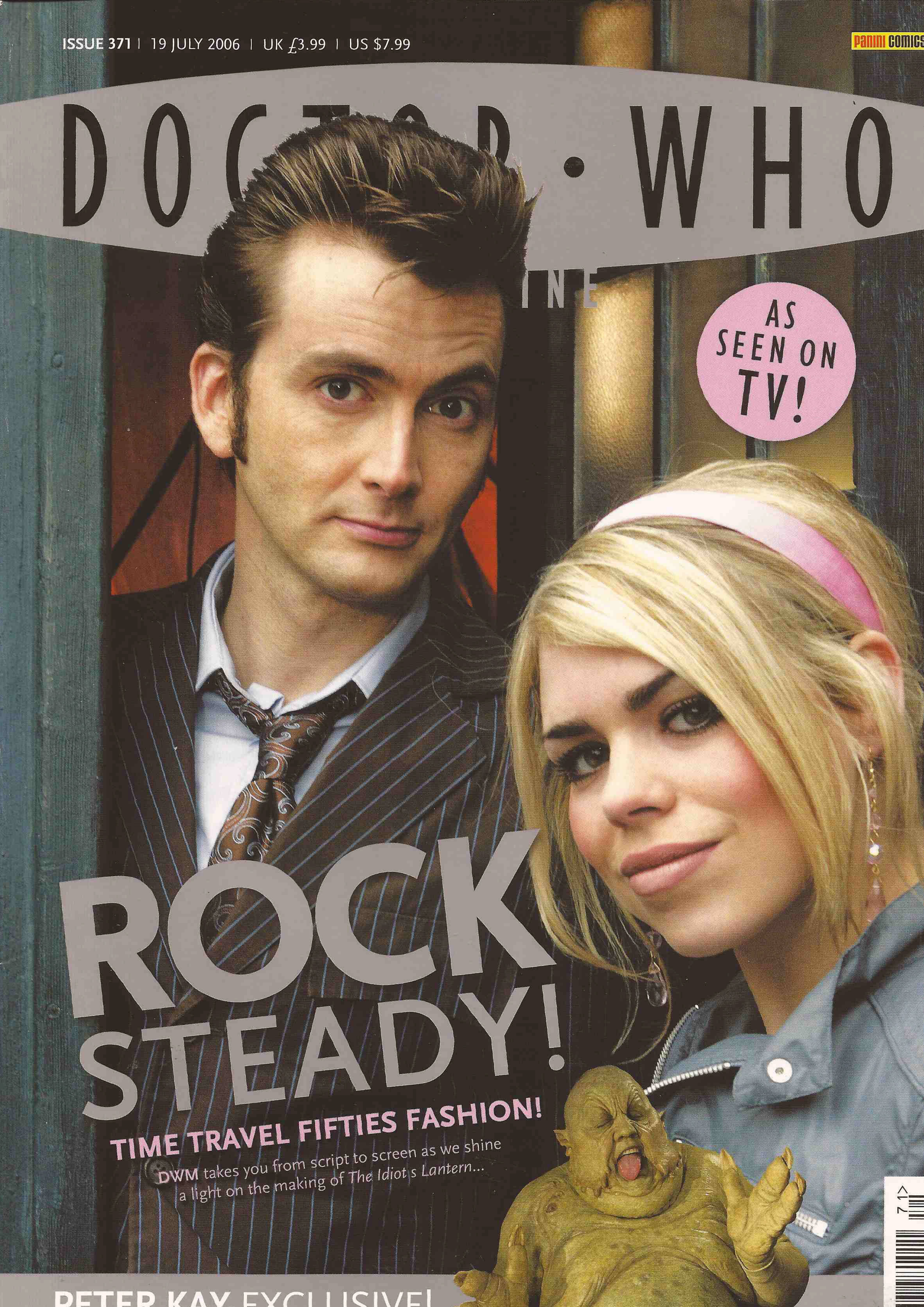
Panini COMICS

DOCTOR · WHO MAGAZINE

371 DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE THE IDIOT'S LANTERN | THE IMPOSSIBLE PLANET | LOVE & MONSTERS | PETER KAY | OFF THE SHELF POLL RESULTS | PREVIEWS: EPISODES 12-13



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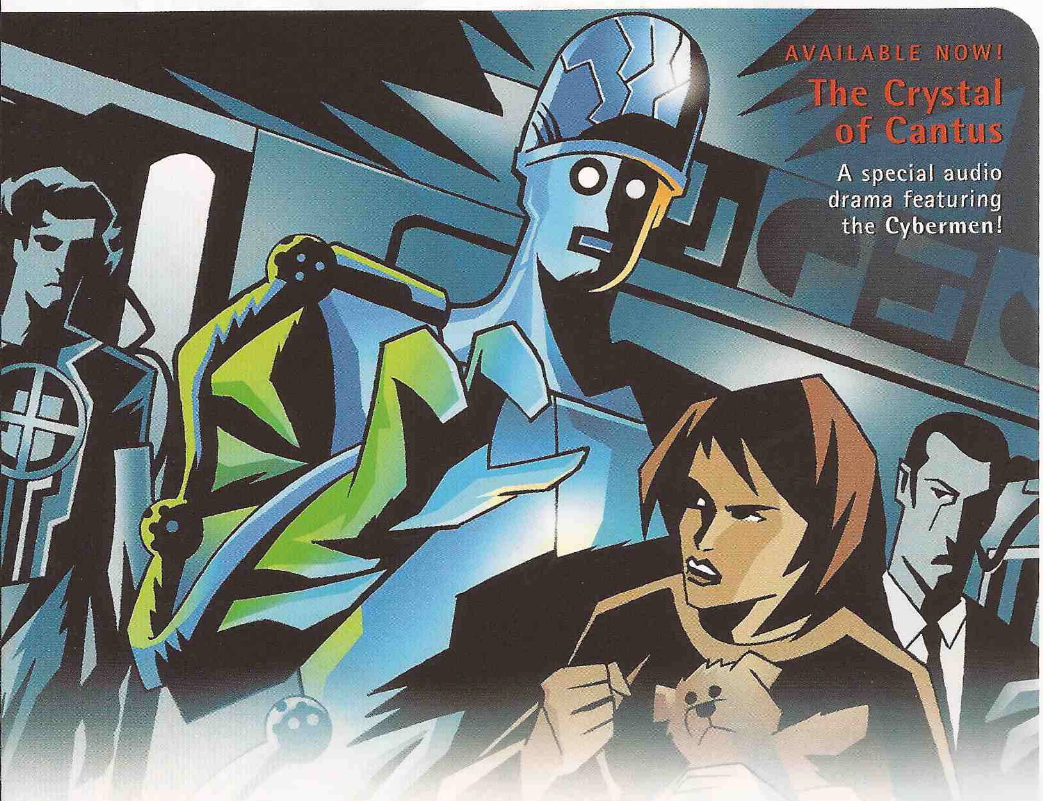
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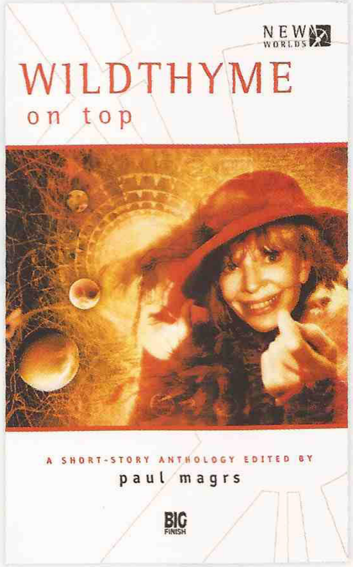

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PULL TO OPEN

DOCTOR · WHO
MAGAZINE

DAMN THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THIS magazine! I've got nothing to editorialise about this month, cos it's all covered elsewhere. The '*Doctor Who* now attracts the best guest stars of any TV series' angle is rendered obsolete by our lovely big interview with Peter Kay which proves that point better than I ever could. The 'I have watched *The Impossible Planet* about 46 times now and I think it's possibly the best thing *ever*' angle pales into insignificance next to James Strong taking us step-by-step through the making of the thing. And even the 'Tabloids turn on *Doctor Who* for apparently losing ratings' angle is covered, stamped on, chopped into bits and spat out by *Public Image*. And a good thing too. Ooh, I wanted to give that there *Media Guardian* a good punch up the bracket when I read that...

So here I sit, superfluous to requirements in my own column. I asked Tom if he wanted a go this month, but he waved me imperiously away and went back to his ratings spreadsheet. Even Neska the office cat couldn't be fagged. Pah.

But young Thomas isn't the only one who can weave statistics and numbers into something magically fascinating, like some sort of computerised Catweazle. Oh no! So in lieu of anything useful, here are some fascinating **DWM** facts with which to amaze your friends:

1) Peter Kay is now a **DWM** subscriber.

2) I have been editing **DWM** for 59 issues. Or 15.9% of the total number of issues ever in the history of time.

3) We're now on sale in Tesco, which is quite exciting. And every little helps.

4) Our current strip, *F.A.Q.*, is the 123rd **DWM** comic strip (not counting specials or back-up strips).

5) The person to have worked on most issues of **DWM** in its 27-year history is Peri Godbold, who clocks up her 112th this month. Well done her!

6) Russell T Davies has a special cupboard containing every single **DWM**. Except one. But he can't remember which one.

And on that bombshell...

Clay

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MANAGING DIRECTOR MIKE RIDDELL

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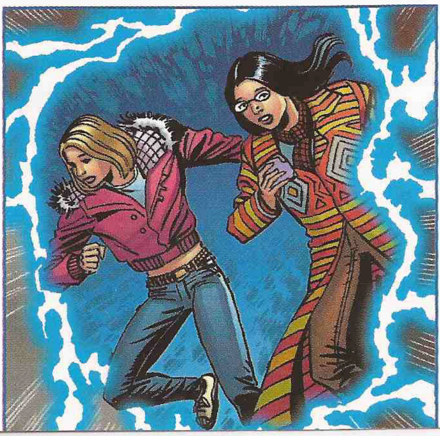
AGAINST ALL OODS!

44 Director James Strong gives **DWM** exclusive access to his diaries in the first of a two-part feature taking us through every stage of production on *The Impossible Planet* and *The Satan Pit*. Don't look behind you...



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GALLIFREY GUARDIAN

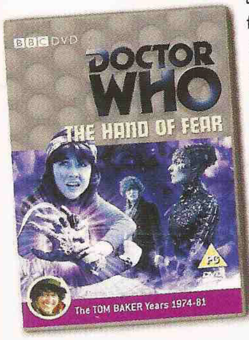
ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLDS OF **DOCTOR WHO**...

DWM Exclusive! 2 | entertain announces a host of new releases for the **Doctor Who** DVD range...

THE DVD INVASION!

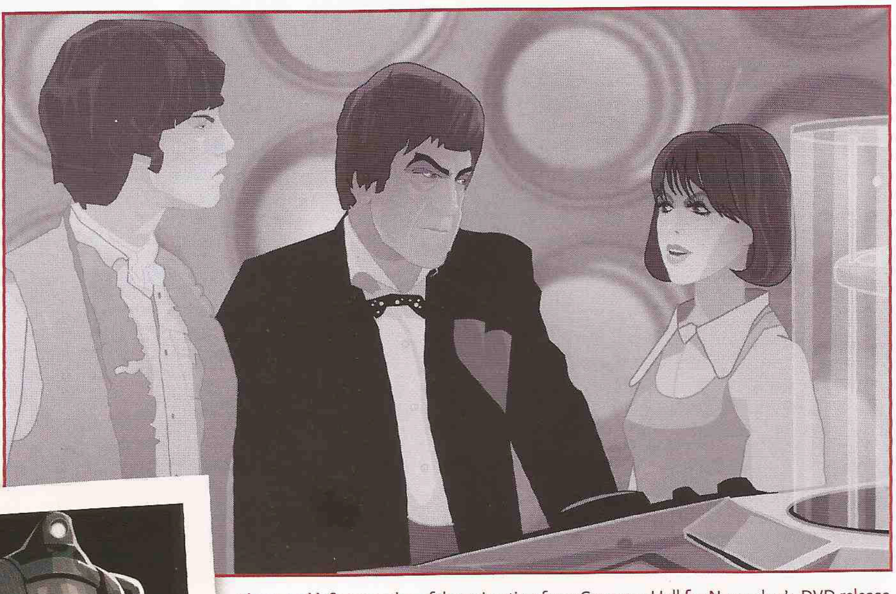
2 | ENTERTAIN HAS CONFIRMED SEVERAL NEW *Doctor Who* DVD titles for later in the year.

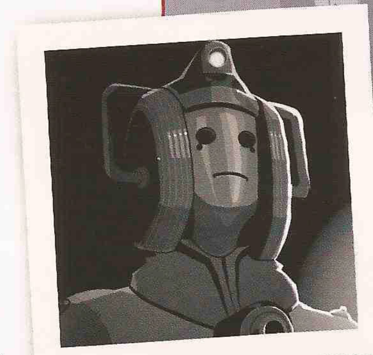
Coming on Monday 24 July is the 1976 adventure *The Hand of Fear*. This story, starring Tom Baker as the Doctor, was the last to regularly feature Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah Jane Smith. As ever the release will feature a number of Extra Features. *Changing Times* is a 50-minute documentary produced by Steve Broster, looking at the relationship between the Doctor and Sarah. It features interviews with Baker and Sladen as well as actors Rex Robinson (Dr Carter), Glyn Houston (Professor Watson) and Stephen Thorne (Kastrian Eldrad), visual effects designer Colin Mapson, co-writer Bob Baker, producer Philip Hinchcliffe, as well as Pertwee-era producer Barry Letts and script editor Terrance Dicks. Elsewhere is an 11-minute extract from the first ever edition of Saturday morning show *Swap Shop* featuring Baker and Sladen; PDFs of the 1977 *Doctor Who Annual* and *Radio Times* listings for the story; plus continuity announcements, information text and photo gallery. Finally, Tom Baker, Elisabeth Sladen, Judith Paris (Eldrad), Bob Baker and Philip Hinchcliffe feature on the commentary across the four episodes.



Following this release is the 1985 adventure *The Mark of the Rani*, starring Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant, on Monday 4 September. Special features include a 43-minute documentary *Lords and Luddites* produced by Steve Broster, featuring interviews with Baker and Bryant, actors Kate O'Mara (the Rani) and Gary Cady (Luke Ward), writers Pip and Jane Baker, script editor Eric Saward and composer Jonathan Gibbs. Gibbs is also interviewed in the 9-minute feature *Playing with Time*, and his score is available in full as an isolated track, along with an alternative score for Part One by John Lewis. Also on the disc is another in the *Now and Then* series, looking at the locations used in the story; an excerpt from Saturday morning show *Saturday Superstore* featuring Baker and Bryant; an excerpt from *Blue Peter* looking at the history of the Ironbridge Gorge; a commentary with Baker, Bryant and O'Mara; deleted scenes, including one with the Doctor and Peri in the TARDIS from the story's original opening; PDFs of the 1985 *Doctor Who Annual* and *Radio Times* listings for the story; plus the usual photo gallery and information text.

DWM spoke to 2 | entertain's Matthew Parkes, to ask about the future of the *Doctor Who* DVD range:





Above and left: Examples of the animation from Cosgrove Hall for November's DVD release of 1968's *The Invasion*. Episode 1 and Episode 4 of this eight-part adventure no longer exist in the BBC Archive, so the animation will be matched to the soundtrack of the episodes.

Hi, Matthew. The return of Doctor Who has been a huge success for BBC One – you must be pleased with the success of the new episodes on DVD?

We're absolutely delighted with the sales on DVD – across the four vanilla releases and the TARDIS Box Set we have now sold over half a million copies. In fact, that set is the second-best-selling 'Series One' DVD Box Set for any programme ever.

We're also seeing a notable increase in sales of 'classic' *Who* stories. We knew *Genesis of the Daleks* was going to be big, but it's already sold over 30,000 making it by far the fastest selling 'classic' title ever.

Talking of older stories, the Doctor Who DVD range has been going since 1999, and we have had 35 stories released (up to Inferno), with 94 complete stories still in the archives for future release. At the current release rate, will we have to wait another 18 years to see them all come out on DVD?

Well, I am delighted to be able to announce we have a solution to that! October will see the release of [1975's two-part story] *The Sontaran Experiment* – an additional release for this year which will include a limited amount of extras and retail at a cheaper price. Then, as of next year, we will continue to release one story with extensive extras every two months, but also pepper the schedule with additional stories with limited special features. There is a real demand out there for more stories, and this seems the ideal solution.

The other release to announce is *The Invasion* in November, capitalising on Cyberman fever, and this is something very special indeed. The two missing episodes have been animated by Cosgrove Hall using fabulous black-and-white Flash animation to the original soundtrack. So this will offer the closest possible experience to watching the original episodes themselves. I can tell you that these episodes really need to be seen to be believed!

The recent Beginning Box Set seems to have gone down very well, as did the Lost in Time set from 2004. Would you consider releasing more 'themed' Box Sets? They certainly proved to be an eagerly awaited annual event in the old VHS range...

We will indeed – there's been a lot of speculation as to what's coming next and I'm pleased to confirm that January's Box Set will be provisionally titled *The Return of the Master* featuring [the three 'linked' stories from 1981-82] *The Keeper of Traken*, *Logopolis* and *Castrovalva*. *The Keeper of Traken* includes a commentary recorded with the late Anthony Ainley and will hopefully be a fitting tribute.

What can you tells us about the Second Series Box Set for the end of the year?

We're putting together a fantastic package for the Series Two Box Set. We've released a draft packshot of the set [below left] which is very close to the final design. What that doesn't show however is that the front image is a lenticular, which features the TARDIS rotating and the time tunnel moving as you move it towards or away from you. There is also a lenticular image on the reverse which will be revealed shortly. They look spectacular and will really stand out both in-store and at home.

Special Features will also be a step-up from last year. In particular we have commissioned specially created CGI monster out-takes exclusively produced for the DVD...

BBC DVD
DOCTOR WHO
THE COMPLETE SECOND SERIES

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Abzorbaloff star Peter Kay gives **DWM** a rare interview...

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The Impossible Planet director James Strong shares his diary with us...

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Russell T Davies takes us backstage at the BAFTAs...

Torchwood continues filming, as **Doctor Who** Series Two nears completion...

THE HUB OF ACTIVITY

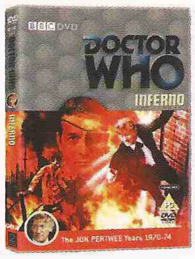
WITH THE CURRENT SERIES OF DOCTOR WHO almost at an end, attention is shifting to the new spin-off series, *Torchwood*, starring John Barrowman as Captain Jack Harkness and Eve Myles as Gwen Cooper. Executive producer Russell T Davies tells us, "Filming is continuing on *Torchwood*, and I'm delighted, it's lovely stuff. We've now got the complete regular cast together – not all of whom have been announced yet, so there's more news to come on that front. And the new Camelot studios are most definitely open, and filming, and amazing! At the start of June, filming's about to start on Block Two, which consists of Episode 3, Helen Raynor's *The Ghost Machine*, and Episode 8, Toby Whithouse's *Greeks Bearing Gifts*, directed by Colin Teague. At the same time, we've started pre-production on Block Three, which also consists of two episodes, directed by none other than *The Impossible Planet*/*The Satan Pit*'s James Strong. After his brilliant work on *Doctor Who*, it's fantastic to welcome him back. And after doing such a wonderful job with alien worlds, I can't wait to see what James does with modern-day Earth."

While *Torchwood* continues, BBC Wales is gearing up for the next series of *Doctor Who*, as producer Phil Collinson explains: "Pre-production is well underway on the 2006 Christmas Special, directed by Euros Lyn, which will be filmed in a block of its own, not doubling up with any other episodes. We're now in the final stages of post-production on Series Two, and it's all on schedule – we should have everything wrapped by mid-June, with the Mill just finalising FX and the final scores and sound FX being mixed.

"One extra piece of casting which was too late for **DWM**, and which you will all have enjoyed recently, is the casting of Gabriel Woolf as the Voice of the Beast in *The Impossible Planet* and *The Satan Pit*. Voice casting is the very last thing done, well after filming, and when we all sat around and thought about evil voices, we all realised that there was no one finer than the original voice of Sutekh from *Pyramids of Mars*. No one else could be that good! It was a delight to realise that Gabriel was still acting, and available. I went along to that dubbing session especially, to meet the man behind such a great villain from my past. And Gabriel was so happy to be asked back – he was the nicest, sweetest man... until he stepped into that recording booth and gave the most chilling reading imaginable! Scared me to death! What an honour to welcome him back to *Doctor Who* – one of those moments in which I really love my job. No doubt his casting led many to expect the return of Sutekh, so I hope we didn't raise too many false expectations amongst the fans – although if you want to knit together a complicated cosmology in which Sutekh and the Beast are related, then let's face it, that's what fandom is for!"

WIN KEITH GOLD AND K9!

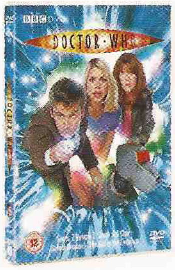
THERE ARE TWO NEW DOCTOR WHO DVDS OUT this month, and we've got chances for you to win both, thanks to the folks at 2 | entertain!



Inferno, starring Jon Pertwee, sees the Doctor trapped on a parallel world facing destruction. It's on sale now in high street stores priced £19.99, but we have FIVE copies of the disc to give away to **DWM** readers. For your chance to win, just tell us the answer to the following question, and send it in on a postcard or on a stuck-down envelope marked **Not dead! That's excellent!** to the **DWM** address on page 10.

What does the Brigade Leader wear that the Brigadier doesn't? Is it...

a) An eyepatch
b) Espidrilles
c) Stiletto heels



Also on sale now is another volume of adventures from the current series of *Doctor Who*, featuring the episodes *Tooth and Claw*, *School Reunion* and *The Girl in the Fireplace*. You can buy this volume at your local DVD store for £15.99, but we've got FIVE copies to give away to **DWM** readers. For your chance to win, just tell us the answer to the question below, mark it **Happy slapping hoodies with ASBOs and ringtones** and post it to the usual **DWM** address:

Which two characters is the Doctor reunited with in *School Reunion*? Is it...

a) Sarah Jane and K9
b) Humker and Tandrell
c) Ping Cho and Mighty Kublai Khan

The closing date for both competitions is 20 July, so you'd better get a move on. Good luck!

OTHER NEWS

▶ CRAFT WORK

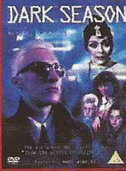
The BAFTA craft awards were held on Friday 19 May, but although *Doctor Who* was represented in four categories [see last issue], there were sadly no winners on the night. However, there were a couple of familiar names who did win an award – Mike Tucker [right], *Doctor Who*'s Model Unit Supervisor, was part of the team that won the BAFTA for Best Visual Effects for their work on BBC One docu-drama *Hiroshima*. Another winner was *Doctor Who*'s Special Make-Up and Prothetics Producer, Neill Gorton. With his colleague Vanessa White, Neill won in the Make-Up and Hair Design category for his work on BBC Two comedy *Help*. Congratulations to Mike, Neill and their colleagues!

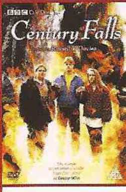
▶ ADVENTURES 6 & 7

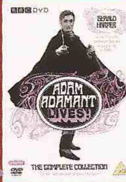
Doctor Who Adventures' Assistant Editor Moray Laing has told **DWM** about the next two issues of the magazine for younger *Doctor Who* fans. Issue 6, out now, is an Ood-tastic edition, which previews Episodes 10 and 11, uncovers TARDIS secrets, and has a guide to *Rise of the Cybermen*. Plus there's instructions on how to build your own Cassandra, a look at the Sycorax, and a comic strip from *Torchwood* writer Si Spencer. The issue also comes free with a set of *Doctor Who* stickers (including glow-in-the-dark ones), as well as the usual posters, puzzles and competitions.

Issue 7, out on 28 June, previews Episodes 12 and 13, and has a Dalek fact-file, more Cyber adventures, a guide to Living Plastic, and a look at the scariest situations the Doctor and Rose have faced so far. You can make your own Dalek mask, and the magazine comes free with a squirty sonic screwdriver (perfect for soaking your mates!), and more stickers. *Doctor Who Adventures* is £1.99 from local newsagents.

▶ CLASSIC BBC SF ON DVD







DWM readers may be interested to know that *Dark Season* and *Century Falls*, the two CBBC fantasy dramas scripted by Russell T Davies in 1991 and 1993 respectively, come to DVD on Monday 17 July. Neither drama has been repeated since their original transmission – with *Century Falls* in particular coming in for criticism for being too scary for young children. *Dark Season* is also notable to *Doctor Who* fans for featuring *Two Doctors* guest star (and *Blake's 7* legend) Jacqueline Pearce.

Also out in July is a complete collection of all the existing *Adam Adamant Lives!* episodes, the 1960s series starring Gerald Harper as the dashing Edwardian adventurer who wakes up in the Swinging Sixties. The series was the brainchild of *Doctor Who* creator Sydney Newman, and was produced by *Doctor Who*'s original producer Verity Lambert. The series also features numerous guest appearances from *Doctor Who* actors, the most prominent being Patrick Troughton in his last role before winning the part of the Second Doctor. The DVD includes a booklet with extensive production information, written by **DWM**'s own Andrew Pixley.

GALLIFREY GUARDIAN

The classic 1970s card game returns for 2006...

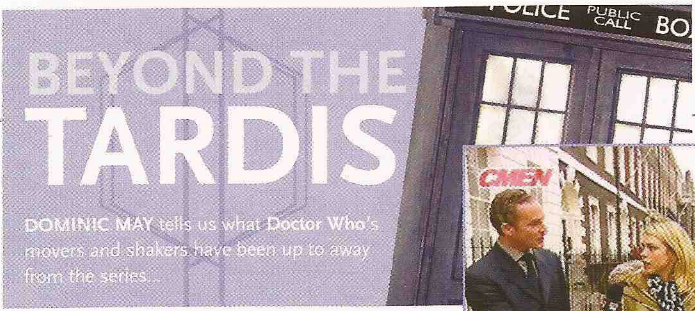
TRUMP THAT!

POLICE BOX
Rose
Clock
Dalek
Height (m)
Intelligence
Monster Rating 10
Darkness 190
Courage 55

GOOD NEWS FOR FANS OF THAT 1970S playground craze Top Trumps – for the first time in almost 30 years, *Doctor Who* is to have its own set of cards.

Card manufacturer Winning Moves Ltd has produced the set, which should be on sale in games retailers now. Each card in the 30-card pack has five categories with which you can out-stat your opponent – 'Height', 'Intelligence', 'Monster Rating', 'Darkness' and 'Courage'. The pack includes a mixture of heroes and villains, giving Jackie Tyler the chance to beat the Face of Boe on 'Darkness', or the Emperor Dalek to triumph over Madame de Pompadour on account of being over five times as tall.

The only thing we're slightly disappointed about is that, unlike in the 1977 pack, there's no Annie Oakley card this time. We reckon she could have the Sycorax leader in a fight any day...



BEYOND THE TARDIS

DOMINIC MAY tells us what Doctor Who's movers and shakers have been up to away from the series...

CMEN
Snarff

TENNANT IN RECOVERY

David Tennant is Alan, a building site manager, who suffers a devastating brain injury following a car crash, in 90-minute BBC One Tony Marchant drama *Recovery*. In preparation he visited the Headway brain injury charity clinic in Essex. He is also tracing his family tree for BBC genealogy series *Who Do You Think You Are*, having already done some filming in Paisley. Both will be screened in the autumn. On 8 May David read Jimmy Porter in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* celebrating the 50th birthday of London's Royal Court Theatre.

BILLIE'S GOLDEN ROSE

Billie Piper was named UK TV Actress of the Year at the *Glamour* magazine awards on Tuesday 6 June, while Channel 4's *The Friday Night Project: Billie Piper* [above right] won Best Variety Show at April's Rose d'Or festival in Switzerland (**Stephen Fry** took Best Gameshow Host for *QI*, while Lynda with a Y, **Jo Joyner**, who has joined *EastEnders* as Tania Branning, won Best Female Comedy Performance for *Swinging*). Billie has lately filmed Victorian heroine Sally Lockhart in BBC One's adaptation of Philip Pullman's *The Ruby in the Smoke* also featuring *The Caves of Androzani*'s **Robert Glenister**.

JACK IN JACK

Tickets for **John Barrowman** as Jack Trot in *Jack and the Beanstalk* at the New Theatre, Cardiff, running from 16 December to 27 January, are available via *www.newtheatrecardiff.co.uk* or 029 2087 8889. The CD world première recording of Stiles and Drew's Rudyard Kipling musical *Just So* featuring Barrowman as the Eldest Magician is released by First Night Records on 26 June.

NOT A NUMBER?

Various newspapers recently reported that **Christopher Eccleston** may play Number Six in a Sky One/Granada remake of *The Prisoner*, but this has been denied by his agent. (**Matthew Graham** is, however, reportedly working on the series.) Eccleston's first TV role since *Doctor Who* is Stuart, a dad pretending to be Catholic to get his daughter into the best local school, in ITV1 thriller *Perfect Parents*, written and directed by **Joe Ahearne**, playing opposite Big Finish's **Susannah Harker** and **David Warner** for broadcast in 2007. As patron of Manchester's Celebrity Pig Theatre Company, Eccleston narrated *Romeo and Juliet – A Question of Choice* featuring a learning disabled cast at the Lowry Theatre on 15 and 16 May.

CAMILLE'S IN SYNCH

Camille Coduri plays ex-porn star Peggy in BBC Three six-part drama series *Sinchronicity*, also featuring **Navin Chowdhry**, about the sexual misadventures of a group of 20-somethings set and filmed in Manchester, under the direction of **Brian Grant** and executive producership of **Julie Gardner**, who fulfils the same role on five comedy drama singles by Tony Basgallop filming in July and August for airing on BBC One in the autumn. Coduri played Janice in ITV1 family drama *Pickles* on 3 June, the co-owner of the dog which found the stolen 1966 World Cup trophy. She will also feature in a Series Four episode of ITV1's *The Last Detective* starring **Peter Davison**. Given what happened to Mickey way back in *Rose*, **Noel Clarke** aptly appears in new 15-minute science-fiction short *Plastic* playing Jock and will be seen in ITV1's *Jane Hall* directed by **Euros Lyn** in July.

MARK'S FEAR OF FANNY

Mark Gatiss will be original celebrity chef Fanny Craddock's long-suffering husband Johnnie in BBC Four comedy drama *Fear of Fanny*, adapted from Brian Fillis' stage play. Gatiss features in BBC Four's *The League of Gentlemen* reruns, which commenced on 25 May and was Jerry Hawthorn in Radio 4's *Life in London*.

BEYOND A JOKE

Steven Moffat's 1990s sitcom *Joking Apart* has been released independently on DVD as an online exclusive, thanks to fan Craig Robins, who acquired the rights after waiting in vain for a full commercial release. Find out more at *www.replaydvd.co.uk* where you can order the disc.

DAVISON TAKES IT EASY

ITV has commissioned *Easy Peasy* starring **Peter Davison** as child psychologist George Huntley, forced to put his theories into practice when his wife (Josie Lawrence) takes a job in Paris leaving their seven-year-old son in his charge. From week commencing 19 June **Colin Baker**'s *Strangers on a Train* tour stops at Cambridge Arts Theatre, Brighton Theatre Royal, Woking New Victoria Theatre, Richmond Theatre and Cardiff New Theatre. **Sylvester McCoy** will tour in a **Stephen Fry**-revised production of *Me and My Girl* commencing 4 September at the Plymouth Theatre Royal with a possible London West End transfer (more details to follow).

QUICKIES

Paul McGann played Peter Verhovensky in Radio 3's *The Possessed*. **Louise Jameson** was Andrea Dobson in BBC One's *Doctors*. **Matthew Graham**'s *Life on Mars*, currently shooting its second series, is nominated as Best Continuing Series at the Banff World Television Festival. **Helen Raynor**'s *Cake* aired as part of BBC One's *Brief Encounters* on 8 May. *The Abominable Snowmen*'s **Henry Lincoln** was profiled on Five's *The Man Behind the Da Vinci Code: Revealed*. Nyder actor **Peter Miles**, a childhood friend of Dusty Springfield, told us exactly what we needed to know on ITV1's *The South Bank Show* on the singer.

OBITUARY

Peter Bryant [left], who produced, co-produced or story-edited every *Doctor Who* between *The Faceless Ones* and *The Space Pirates*, died on 19 May aged 82. A full tribute will appear in the next issue. **David Halliwell**, who wrote aborted two-parter *Attack from the Mind* for Season 23, died on 16 March aged 69.

PUBLIC IMAGE

TOM SPILSBURY LOOKS AT HOW **DOCTOR WHO** HAS BEEN FARING IN THE TELEVISION RATINGS WAR, AND IN THE DVD CHARTS...

DOCTOR WHO HAS CONTINUED TO COMMAND huge audiences over the past couple of months, with six of the first eight episodes emerging as the most-watched programme of the day, and all eight comfortably winning their slots against the direct competition from ITV1.

Sarah Jane and K9's return in *School Reunion* on the early May Bank Holiday weekend attracted 8.31 million viewers, trouncing ITV1's terrestrial première of *Hulk* (2.4 million), which was also outrated by BBC Two's *World Snooker* coverage. As ever, this put *Doctor Who* as one of the most-watched shows on television, with only *EastEnders*, *Coronation Street*, *Heartbeat* and a single *Emmerdale* instalment faring better in the week. A week later *The Girl in the Fireplace* (7.9 million) also easily won its battle against movie *Peter Pan* (3.5m).

Better was still to come, however, on Saturday 13 May. *Rise of the Cybermen* was delayed by around 25 minutes from its scheduled start time, due to the overrunning FA Cup Final between Liverpool and West Ham United, which averaged 6.1 million viewers over the five-hour broadcast. The eventual penalty shoot-out was seen by over 11 million – which had a pleasing knock-on effect for the rest of BBC One's evening schedule, with many programmes enjoying higher ratings than usual. This, combined with the hype surrounding the Cybermen's return, helped bring a massive audience of 9.22 million to *Doctor Who* – well over three times the number who tuned in for yet another screening of the first *X Men* movie on ITV1. This exceptionally high figure was also enough to see *Doctor Who* record its second-highest-ever chart placing, settling in at Number 6, behind the week's four *Coronation Streets*, and one *EastEnders*, with *Doctor Who* even managing to out-rate the other three visits to Albert Square earlier in the week. Only *The Ark in Space* Part Two, shown in February 1975, has ever achieved a higher chart placing for *Doctor Who*, when it made Number 5.

Such a spectacular rating is very unusual – and so not the sort of thing we ought to expect *every* week – but it's interesting to see that even 2005's début episode *Rose* wasn't able to chart quite *this* highly, or beat so many editions of those ever-popular soaps.

RadioTimes
WELCOME BACK?
FREE INSIDE! Doctor Who sticker book & poster
SATELLITE WEEK
CUP FINAL FEVER
Return of the Cybermen
THE A TEAM REUNITED!
TVguide
Doctor versus Cybermen
Big Brother's back!

The concluding part of the story, *The Age of Steel*, was scheduled in a much earlier slot due to BBC One's coverage of *The Eurovision Song Contest*, and inevitably rated lower than the first half of the story. Nevertheless, with 7.63 million viewers, the episode was still able to beat strong competition from ITV1's coverage of *The Prince's Trust 30th Birthday* concert, which averaged 5.3 million across the evening.

The earlier-than-usual start may have caught some potential viewers out, although perhaps we should count our blessings. Had the episode gone out at the usual time, the Fathers 4 Justice protesters who made an uninvited appearance on *The National Lottery: Jet Set* might have instead turned up at the climax of *The Age of Steel*, and ruined Mickey's big leaving scene.

Episode 7, *The Idiot's Lantern*, saw *Doctor Who* face a bigger challenge from ITV1 than any episode had encountered for over a year. Ever since *Doctor Who* went up against *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway* last year, no ITV1 programme has really come close to beating *Doctor Who* in a head-to-head battle. Once again, it was those cheeky chappies from Newcastle who gave the Doctor a run for his money, as the hosts of *Soccer Aid*, a week-long series of programmes culminating in a charity football match between an England team captained by pop star Robbie Williams and a Rest-of-the-World line-up including Argentinian legend Diego Maradona. The match itself averaged 6.4 million viewers, slightly eating into *Doctor Who*'s usual audience – but the good news is that despite all the hype surrounding *Soccer Aid*, *The Idiot's Lantern* still managed to record an even higher audience of 6.76 million. Once again, this was more than enough to make *Doctor Who* the top-rated programme for Saturday night.

At the time of going to press, final figures were not available for Episode 8, *The Impossible Planet*, but the initial 'overnight' figure saw that over 5.9 million watched the programme live, with the audience peaking at almost 7 million in the final five minutes. While this is slightly lower than usual, it should be noted that ratings for all TV programmes were down, due mainly to the long-awaited arrival of summer weather in most parts of the UK, while *Doctor Who*'s massive audience share of over 40% was actually one of its strongest to date. Even top-rated programmes such as *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders* had rated under 8 million the previous night, when they generally attract in excess of 10 million viewers. When those who recorded *The Impossible Planet* are considered, we should see a much higher figure for the final total.

It's also worth pointing out that – despite the scare stories you may have read in the press – if you compare *Doctor Who*'s viewing figures to the ratings achieved on the corresponding Saturday last year, most of 2006's episodes have recorded an even better figure than their 2005 equivalent; no small feat given the massive success of last year's series. Overall TV audiences tend to drop as summer arrives, so it will be interesting to see whether the World Cup can help reverse this trend, and entice more viewers indoors to watch the box. Join me in four weeks to find out...

Finally, a quick cheer for BBC Three. The second series of *Doctor Who Confidential* has been recording consistently high audiences, usually ranking as Saturday's highest-rated programme in the Multi-Channel charts. Sunday night's *Doctor Who* repeats have also been doing good business for the channel, even prompting an extra week of repeats of Episodes 1-5 between Monday 22 and Friday 26 May. DWM

DOCTOR · WHO 2006 TELEVISION RATINGS UPDATE

EPISODE	TRANSMITTED	RATING (Chart Position)	AUD SHARE	BBC THREE REPEATS**	HIGHEST-RATED OPPOSITION (Channel)	RATING (Chart Pos)	AUD SHARE
SERIES EPISODES (All first broadcast on BBC One)							
1 New Earth	15 Apr 2006, 19:15	8.62m (9th)	40%	0.40m/0.48m/0.24m	FILM Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (ITV1)	5.10m (32nd)	26%
2 Tooth and Claw	22 Apr 2006, 19:15	9.24m (10th)	43%	0.56m/0.41m/0.25m	Midsomer Murders (repeat) (ITV1)	3.48m (—)	18%
3 School Reunion	29 Apr 2006, 19:20	8.31m (12th)	42%	0.63m/0.43m/0.27m	World Snooker (BBC Two)	2.64m (—)	16%
4 The Girl in the Fireplace	6 May 2006, 19:00	7.90m (13th)	38%	0.69m/0.35m/0.24m	FILM Peter Pan (ITV1)	3.50m (—)	18%
5 Rise of the Cybermen	13 May 2006, 19:25	9.22m (6th)	44%	0.63m/0.31m/0.14m	FILM X Men (ITV1)	3.06m (—)	16%
6 The Age of Steel	20 May 2006, 18:35	7.63m (15th)	38%	0.62m/0.39m	The Prince's Trust 30th Birthday – Live (ITV1)	5.30m (28th)	23%
7 The Idiot's Lantern	27 May 2006, 19:00	6.76m (18th)	32%	0.64m/0.41m*	Soccer Aid Live: England vs Rest of the World (ITV1)	6.40m (21st)	31%
8 The Impossible Planet	3 June 2006, 19:00	5.94m* (tba)	40%*	0.66m*/tba	FILM Tomorrow Never Dies (ITV1)	2.5m* (tba)	18%*

EPISODE	TRANSMITTED	RATING (BBC3 Chart Pos)	AUD SHARE
DOCTOR WHO CONFIDENTIAL (All first broadcast on BBC Three)			
X One Year On	9 Apr 2006, 19:00	0.28m (–)	2%
1 New New Doctor	15 Apr 2006, 20:00	0.76m (3rd)	5%
2 Fear Factor	22 Apr 2006, 20:00	0.66m (1st)	5%
3 Friends Reunited	29 Apr 2006, 20:05	0.61m (5th)	4%
4 Script to Screen	6 May 2006, 19:45	0.73m (2nd)	5%
5 Cybermen	13 May 2006, 20:10	0.78m (2nd)	4%
6 From Zero to Hero	20 May 2006, 19:25	0.63m (1st)	4%
7 The Writer's Tale	27 May 2006, 19:45	0.45m (5th)	3%
8 You've Got the Look	3 June 2006, 19:45	0.54m* (tba)	5%

* = Preliminary 'overnight' figure only.

** BBC Three repeats of each *Doctor Who* episode were on Sundays at around 19:00 and Fridays at 21:00. Episodes 1 to 5 received an extra repeat in the week of Monday 22 and Friday 27 May at 19:00.

DOCTOR WHO CONFIDENTIAL REPEATS:

Episode 1 Sunday 16 April at 19:45 (full repeat, 0.34m)
Monday 22 May at 19:45 (Cut-down only, 0.09m)
Episode 2 Sunday 23 April at 3:25 (full repeat, no audience data)
Tuesday 23 May at 19:45 (Scheduled but not shown)
Episode 3 Monday 1 May at 3:05 (full repeat, no audience data)
Wednesday 24 May at 19:45 (Scheduled but not shown)
Episode 4 Sunday 7 May at 19:00 (Cut-down only, 0.30m)
Monday 8 May at 3.25 (full repeat, no audience data)
Friday 12 May at 21:45 (Cut-down only, 0.25m)
Thursday 25 May at 19:45 (Cut-down only, 0.13m)
Episode 5 Sunday 14 May at 19:45 (full repeat, 0.33m)
Friday 19 May at 21:45 (Cut-down only, 0.17m)
Friday 26 May at 19:45 (Cut-down only, 0.11m)
Episode 6 Sunday 21 May at 19:45 (Cut-down only, 0.36m)
Monday 22 May at 3.25 (full repeat, no audience data)
Friday 26 May at 21:45 (Cut-down only, 0.16m)
Episode 7 Sunday 28 May at 19:55 (Cut-down only, 0.37m)
Friday 2 June at 21:45 (Cut-down only, 0.21m)
Episode 8 Sunday 4 June at 19:45 (Cut-down only, 0.42m)
Friday 26 May at 21:45 (Cut-down only, tba)

No audience data available for broadcasts between 2 and 6am.

All data: BARB.

COMING UP

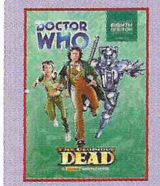
Your full guide to where you can find **Doctor Who** on TV, audio, DVD and in print over the next month.

JUNE

■ SATURDAY 24

TV **Doctor Who: Fear Her** by Matthew Graham [Tenth Doctor and Rose] *BBC One* [See page 25]

■ WEDNESDAY 28



Magazine **Doctor Who Adventures #7** *BBC Magazines* £1.99

■ ALSO THIS MONTH

Graphic Novel **Doctor Who: The Glorious Dead** by Scott Gray, Alan Barnes, Martin Geraghty, Adrian Salmon, Roger Langridge [Eighth Doctor, Izzy and Kroton] *Panini* £14.99

JULY

■ SATURDAY 1

TV **Doctor Who: Army of Ghosts** by Russell T Davies [Tenth Doctor, Rose and Jackie] *BBC One* [See page 33]

■ SATURDAY 8

TV **Doctor Who: Doomsday** by Russell T Davies [Tenth Doctor, Rose and Jackie] *BBC One* [See page 33]

■ MONDAY 10

DVD **Doctor Who: Rise of the Cybermen/The Age of Steel/The Idiot's Lantern** by Tom MacRae and Mark Gatiss [Tenth Doctor, Rose and Mickey] *2 | entertain* £15.99

■ WEDNESDAY 12

Magazine **Doctor Who Adventures #8** *BBC Magazines* £1.99

■ THURSDAY 20

DWM **Issue 372** *Panini Comics* £3.99

■ MONDAY 24

DVD **Doctor Who: The Hand of Fear** by Bob Baker and Dave Martin [Fourth Doctor and Sarah Jane] *2 | entertain* £19.99

■ ALSO THIS MONTH

CD **Doctor Who: The Nowhere Place** by Nicholas Briggs *Big Finish* £14.99 [See page 64]

CD **Gallifrey 3.3: Appropriation** by Paul Sutton *Big Finish* £10.99

AND DON'T FORGET...

TV **Totally Doctor Who** Every Thursday at 17:00 *BBC One*, repeated Saturdays at 18:30 *CBBC Channel*

TV **Doctor Who Confidential** Every Saturday at 19:45 *BBC Three*, repeated Sundays at 19:45 *BBC Three*

TV **Doctor Who** Each new episode is repeated every Sunday around 19:00 *BBC Three*, and Fridays at 21:00 *BBC Three*

DOCTOR·WHO CONFIDENTIAL

Doctor Who Confidential's Gillane Seaborne tells **DWM** about the latest episodes...

11 SCREAM *(tx: 24 June, BBC Three)*

A look back at how *Doctor Who* has frightened households across the land for the past 40 years. Whether in the creepy black and white of the 1960s, or the glorious colour of twenty-first century, the fear of the dark remains as strong as ever. Check what's under *your* bed...

12/13 TITLES tbc *(tx: 1 & 8 June, BBC Three)*

Like the *Doctor Who* episodes themselves, these editions are surrounded in secrecy – but expect all the usual behind-the-scenes info and interviews!

Three new Tenth Doctor novels confirmed – but what of the PDA range?

PAST DOCTORS FUTURE?

BBC
DOCTOR·WHO
DOCTOR WHO FILES
THE DOCTOR
BBC
DOCTOR·WHO
ROSE

THREE NEW DOCTOR WHO NOVELS featuring the Tenth Doctor and Rose have been confirmed for September. These are *The Nightmare of Black Island* by Mike Tucker, *The Art of Destruction* by Stephen Cole and *The Price of Paradise* by Colin Brake. Also coming in October is a new range from the BBC's Penguin division, under the umbrella title *The Doctor Who Files*. There are four volumes in the set – featuring the Doctor, Rose, the Slitheens and the Sycorax [covers can be seen to the right].

Meanwhile, **DWM** also spoke to BBC Books' Justin Richards to ask about the future of the *Doctor Who* novels range, particularly for the Doctor's past incarnations:

Hi, Justin. What can you tell us about the future BBC Books' long-running paperback series of 'previous Doctor adventures'? The range seemed to just fade away with a whimper after Andrew Cartmel's Atom Bomb Blues last December...

Yes, the question is still there of what we do with the past Doctor books. The intention is not just to leave it there, it's a question of 'what' we do with them, not 'if' we're going to do something with them. There will be more 'past Doctor' books, but when and how and in what format and how many and where does the Ninth Doctor fit... all these issues need to be sorted out, and they're not something you can fudge.

Presumably if you were to relaunch in the near future, you'd have to revise your views on who your market is now compared to, say, five years ago?

Very much so. However kind you want to be to the past Doctor novels, and however good you think the ones in the latter part of last year, in were – the fact remains that the books based on the current TV series have outsold them by a factor of ten. And we couldn't let that go on – we need to find some way of bringing those books to a wider audience. But there's no point in just doing clones of the new series books with old Doctors in, because each past Doctor is distinctive. If the 'past Doctors' range had an overall failing in the past, it's that we didn't distinguish between the Doctors enough. We hadn't had a distinctive 'brand' for each Doctor...

Is this something you're actively thinking about, or just idle speculation?

I'm waiting for someone to tell me where we go next! I've said my piece – what I think we should do and in what format, how many we should do, and, up to a point, who should do them. So we'll see. We're expecting further developments very soon and **DWM** readers will be the first to hear what's planned!

Katy Manning joins BBC Audiobooks for the **Monsters on Earth** release...

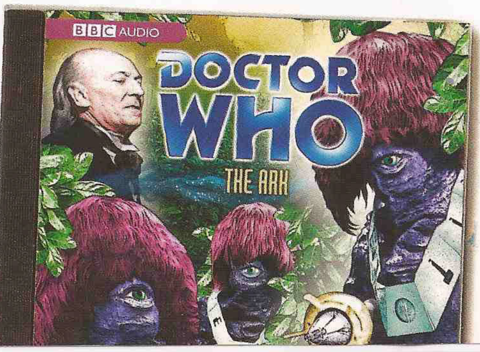
THE SEA DEVIL INSIDE!

BBC AUDIOBOOKS' MICHAEL STEVENS HAS told **DWM** about an exciting new *Doctor Who* release coming this autumn – featuring none other than Katy Manning, alias 1970s companion Jo Grant.

"Yes, indeed!" says Michael. "We were very pleased that during a recent visit to the UK, Katy was able to come to the our Bath studios to record linking narration for the 1972 story *The Sea Devils*, one of the soundtrack titles which will make up *Monsters on Earth* – a seven-disc collectors' tin due for release in October. Mark Ayres was in the producer's seat to record narration for the six episodes, plus a bonus interview. Katy is a wonderful linking narrator, and I think the results are going to be fantastic. Even though we worked late into the evening, great fun was had by all – Katy is a woman of a thousand voices (although you won't hear them all on *The Sea Devils!*) and quite lovely to work with. The other titles in the set will be *Doctor Who and the Silurians* [1970] and *Warriors of the Deep* [1984], making this something of an 'Eocene Tin'!"

Michael also confirmed that this August will see the soundtrack release of the classic 1966 adventure *The Ark* [pictured right], narrated by Peter Purves (Steven Taylor in the story), and then in September comes *Doctor Who at the BBC – The Plays*, a two-CD set which features the radio dramas *Regenerations* (a 2001 play, set at a *Doctor Who* convention), *Blue Veils and Golden Sands* (about the BBC Radiophonic Workshop composer Delia Derbyshire) and *Dalek, I Love You*, a recent BBC7 drama about a *Doctor Who* fan and his mysterious new friend.

DWM readers may also be interested in some other new releases from BBC Audiobooks – July sees the release of three titles in the BBC's *Classic Radio Sci-Fi* range. The first is the 1968 dramatisation of *Day of the Triffids*, which features several *Doctor Who* names in the cast, including Peter Sallis, Peter Pratt and David Brierley. The second is *Aliens in the Mind*, a six-part serial from 1977, written by *Doctor Who* scribe Robert Holmes, and starring Peter Cushing and Vincent Price. *The Five Doctors*' Richard Hurndall is also in the cast. The third release is *The Quatermass Memoirs*, a 1996 documentary/play based on the legendary television series, starring Andrew Keir and narrated by creator Nigel Kneale.



BBC AUDIO

BBC Classic RADIO SCI-FI

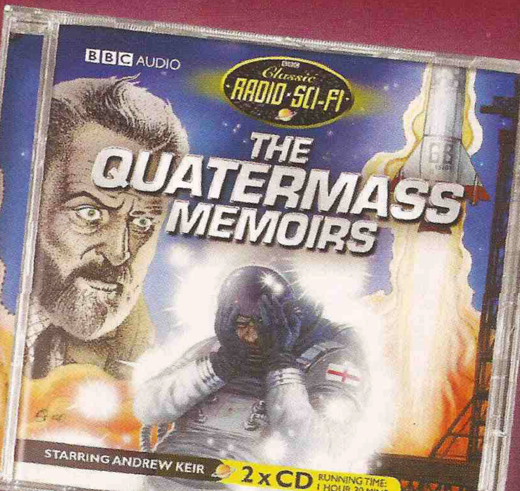
BBC AUDIO
BBC Classic RADIO SCI-FI
THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY JOHN WYNDHAM
3 x CD
RUNNING TIME: 2 HOURS 50 MINS

The Day of the Triffids

Giles Cooper's six-part dramatisation from 1968 stars Gary Watson, Barbara Shelley and Peter Sallis, with appearances from Doctor Who names Peter Pratt, Christopher Bidmead and David Brierley. Divided by blindness and societal breakdown, humanity is at the mercy of the carniverous Triffids...

The Quatermass Memoirs

First broadcast in 1996, this gripping serial weaves extracts from the original Quatermass TV episodes with contemporary news footage, narration by writer Nigel Kneale, and a new dramatic thread – with Andrew Keir reprising the role of the legendary professor.


BBC AUDIO
BBC Classic RADIO SCI-FI
THE QUATERMASS MEMOIRS
STARRING ANDREW KEIR
2 x CD
RUNNING TIME: 1 HOUR 30 MINS

BBC AUDIO
BBC Classic RADIO SCI-FI
ALIENS IN THE MIND
STARRING VINCENT PRICE & PETER CUSHING
3 x CD
RUNNING TIME: 2 HOURS 45 MINS

Aliens in the Mind

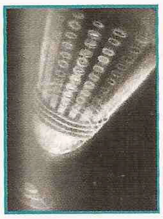
Based on a story by Doctor Who script editor Robert Holmes, this six-part 1977 drama stars horror film legends Vincent Price and Peter Cushing, with an appearance by Richard Hurndall. A remote Scottish island harbours powerful forces - and they are bent on world domination!

New Worlds to Discover

Exciting CD adventures

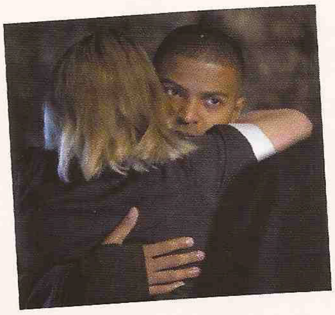
available at PLAY.COM and all good audio retailers

We also heard from… **ADRIAN WILTSHIRE:** "I recently visited the Modernist Exhibition at the V&A Museum in London. On display is a work by Russian Modernist, Georgii Krutikov, called the Apartment Complex from his City in the Sky series [pictured right]. I was immediately struck by the uncanny resemblance of the work to a Dalek. Do you know if Raymond Cusick ever acknowledged this painting as an inspiration for his Dalek design?" Ooh, spooky! **NOEL BUTTERWORTH:** "Can I use **DWM** to congratulate Russell T Davies and the whole *Doctor Who* team for the BAFTA Awards, please? Well done to all, and well deserved! When Russell was on stage accepting his award, I thought 'I can't wait to read his *Production Notes* in **DWM** describing the moment!'" Turn to page 66 now to find Russell doing just that…



the uniqueness of the character, making him into something that little bit less extraordinary.

ANDREW CURNOW E-MAIL



Ooh, bit of a split there, readers. It's like 1996 all over again – only with a bit less ranting. So now let's turn to something almost guaranteed to bring unity to us fans – the joy of old monsters making a comeback…

DELETE AS APPLICABLE

Wow! That's how I always hoped the Cybermen would make me feel… Terrified! I've always been a bit disappointed with them until now – a bit camp to see men running around in bacofoil – so praise all round for a well deserved upgrade, as the new-look Cybermen are fantastic. I'm writing this after the first episode and what a cliffhanger! I can't wait til the conclusion…

GRACE FLOOD E-MAIL

I've been a bit lukewarm about the new series so far (although I did enjoy *The Girl in the Fireplace*) but *Rise of the Cybermen* has totally blown me away. It was genuinely quite scary to watch the troops of Cybermen and I was reminded how they used to frighten me so much more than the Daleks.

It's also cool to have them so unstoppable – they were, after all, getting to the point of being vulnerable to gold, bullets, arrows, and a girl with a catapult!

SIMON SMITH E-MAIL

I've been watching *Doctor Who* since 23 November 1963, and have never felt compelled to write before, but I had to now. The scene in *The Age of Steel* with Sally Phelan's "So cold" was the most affecting piece I've ever seen in the programme. The writing and acting was of such high standard. This was real human drama in a sci-fi setting. Surely it doesn't come better than this? But then again, maybe it can…

CHRIS ORE EDENBRIDGE

Every week in *Doctor Who* I looked forward to seeing if Mickey was going to be in it. So at the end of *The Age of Steel* I was completely devastated and I cried for ages and ages. Was that the point, making everyone feel really bad? I was so happy when I found out that Mickey was going to become a member of the TARDIS team and now I am really upset. Mickey was my favourite character and now you have wiped him out. Why???

LAURA CHAPMAN (14) E-MAIL

Congratulations to all those involved in the production of *Rise of the Cybermen/The Age of Steel*, especially to the genius of Tom MacRae's script and the spot-on direction from Graeme Harper. The idea behind the Cybermen was always a horrific one and it was fantastic to see first-class production values now bring that out fully. The way in which Mickey has been written out of the series was also perfect; I've just got used to him now, it would have been awful for him to die. Thanks Noel Clarke, you were cool! I thought I'd also mention *The Idiot's Lantern*; I really enjoyed it, a bubbly Saturday romp with historical observation mixed in with alien fiction, *Doctor Who* at its best. Keep it up!

MATTHEW TRINDER E-MAIL

I have just watched *The Age of Steel* and can't believe that Mickey, the best companion for ages, has gone. Here was a character who was like all of us and had the chance to grow. But Mickey had that vulnerability which we all have which made him more identifiable with all of us viewers. So I want to start a campaign to bring him back, because Noel Clarke is too good to lose and there is so much character development in him still to go. Does anyone else agree?

GARETH BROWN E-MAIL

Curse you, **DWM**! There I am, the day before a big exam, and I find myself hopelessly distracted by Jason Arnopp's absurdly well-written article on the return of the Cybermen. Ah well, at least I'll fail a happy student…

NICK MELLISH E-MAIL

DOWN TO THE WIRE

Just how good was *The Idiot's Lantern*? I mean that surely has to be the best episode so far – Maureen Lipman was simply fantastic, she frightened my seven-year-old nephew so much he actually stepped away from the TV screen, saying "Don't let her get me, Steven!" Bless the BBC and bless ya Mark Gatiss – now can you write at least six episodes a year?

STEVEN TALBOT E-MAIL

I've just watched *The Idiot's Lantern* and thought, what a brilliant episode! Maureen Lipman was great as the Wire. The way she kept saying "Hungry!" was really creepy. The kids would have been watching from behind the sofa for sure. Classic *Doctor Who*!

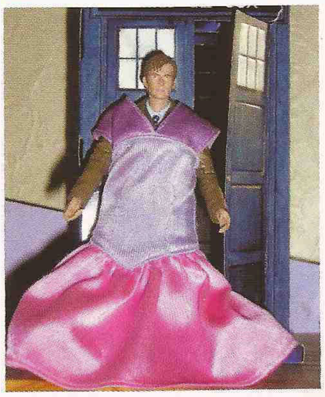
MARK BADGER E-MAIL

MURRAY'S MINT

After last year, I didn't think that Murray Gold's music scores could get any better. Fortunately, however, I was wrong. In fact, the music has been one of my highlights of Series Two so far, and nothing has been anything less than superb – no mean feat. Congratulations, Murray!

JEFF SMITH E-MAIL

DOCTOR IN DIS DRESS



As a red-blooded woman who loves the 'new new Doctor' for more than his mind(!), I decided to buy a David Tennant figure recently. One day, however, he went missing. I knew I need look no further than my five-year-old daughter Lilly's bedroom and lo and behold I found him wearing the outfit you see in this photo!

When I questioned Lilly as to why he was dressed in such a way, she simply said, "He looks good in pink, Mummy!" Can't argue with that I suppose! Something for Russell T Davies and the gang to debate for Series Three…?

NICKY BEARDS CHESTERFIELD

Bless you Nicky – and Lilly! That would be our £2 Postal Order Winning Letter Of The Month. Um, if we had such a thing. So a bittersweet victory there…

COMING IN **DWM** 372

◀ DOOMSDAY IS NIGH…

We venture behind the scenes of Series Two's explosive finalé, talking to David Tennant and Tracy-Ann Oberman among others, as well as finding out what the Cybermen have been up to since Battersea blew up, and just what Russell T Davies is playing at!

FILE IT UNDER FEAR. HER.

Never trust a spooky child, that's our motto! Let's hope that Jason Arnopp gets to finish his *Fear Her* set report before the scribble monster gets him!

DEVIL OF A TIME

Director James Strong concludes his in-depth look behind the scenes of *The Satan Pit*!

PLUS…

Vote in the 2006 **DWM** Season Survey; all the latest news in *Gallifrey Guardian*; the *Matrix Data Bank* finds itself put on trial; the start of a brand new comic strip, *The Futurists*; reviews of the latest TV episodes, DVD and CD releases; *The Time Team* contemplate Tom Baker's swansong; and tons more!

AVAILABLE FROM WHSmith AND ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS AND COMIC SHOPS FROM 20 JULY 2006, PRICE £3.99

Love, Actually

First, there was LINDA – a group that stalked a Time Lord. Then, there was the Abzorbaloff – an alien monster that stalked a group that stalked a Time Lord. Now, there's **Benjamin Cook** – a **DWM** reporter who stalked an alien monster that stalked a group that stalked a Time Lord. Isn't love complicated?

IT'S 24 FEBRUARY 2006, AND I bump into Russell T Davies in a corridor at BBC Llandaff, in Cardiff. So we make small talk, as you do, and then – and this is why it's always worth bumping into Russell in a corridor (seriously, throw yourself in front of him if ever you get the chance) – he tells me a Very Big Secret. He tells me who they've cast as the villain in *Love & Monsters*. And then he makes me swear not to tell a soul.

It's *Peter Kay*! Pardon me while I pick up my jaw off the floor. How on Earth has the production team pulled off such a casting coup? Apparently, last year, Peter wrote Russell a fan letter...

"We do get told quite often that such-and-such an actor wants to appear," Russell tells me, "but usually it turns out that they want to play the Master, so the whole thing falls through. Peter's casting is a rare event. As a rule, I don't really care who's expressed an interest: they've got to be right, or there's no point in doing it."

On the train home that evening, I read through Russell's script for *Love & Monsters*. It's awesome and makes me laugh out loud, and I'm dying to know who's been cast in the lead role of Elton Pope. I text Russell. No reply. It's almost midnight. He must have gone to bed.

The following morning, I get a text message. I haven't had a good text in a long time. "God knows about Elton," writes Russell. "I say Ronnie Corbett." After a few minutes, another message arrives: "What a barmy episode! He ends up in love with a paving stone. You don't get that on *Battlestar Galactica*."

Later, Russell reveals that Elton was, at one stage, going to be a woman, "but as I started work on Series Two," he explains, "I had Cassandra, Sarah Jane, Madame de Pompadour, and the Wire knocking about – too many ladies! So he became a man instead."

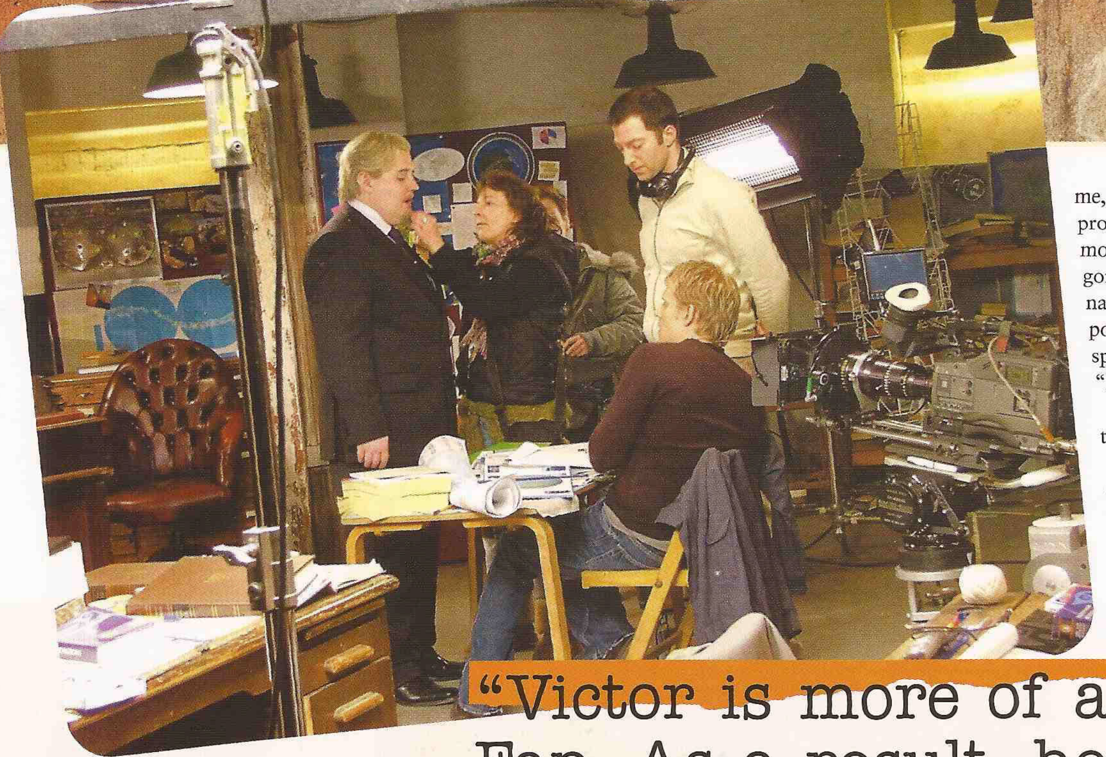
When did Russell figure out that he had to tell the story from Elton's point-of-view?

"That didn't take any figuring out," he says. "It's so integral to the story, there was no other option. Every script creates its own rules, and working out those rules is one of the most difficult parts of writing, because they're never fixed. It's a different rule for each episode. But I'm not exactly a novice; I've been around a bit!"

What, then, were the rules governing this story's narrator? Elton tells us a lot of expository information, but it doesn't get in the way of the narrative...

"Actually," points out Russell, "Elton-as-narrator makes the exposition easy. I won't force in exposition too much – for example, the werewolf in *Tooth and Claw* can't talk, and never gets the chance to explain its back-story, so there's an awful lot that you never discover. I like that; I think it allows gaps in the story, gaps that your imagination can creep into, to invent stuff. But Elton was the perfect solution. One 'rule' that I learnt during [his 2005 BBC Three drama] *Casanova* was not to use your narrator too much. It can kill the energy dead. If you notice, once Victor Kennedy arrives, we hardly cut back to Elton-to-camcorder at all. That was important, to feel that you're inside the story of LINDA and Victor, not looking back at it. Besides, Elton is far more than just the narrator: he's the hero! He's a classic example of the kind of character that *Doctor Who* does so well: the ordinary man, who discovers his own bravery, who realises that the world is so much bigger, and stranger than he first thought. That's the companion's role in this show, and Elton takes it centre stage."

On 16 March, I sit in on the read-through for *Love & Monsters*, in Cardiff's Holland House Hotel. This is where pretty much the whole cast – bar Peter (whose part is read in by casting director Andy Pryor) and Billie Piper (replaced for one night only by script editor ►



▲ *Victor Kennedy's beard is adjusted...*

> "Victor is more of a Super Fan. As a result, he spoils it for everyone else..." RUSSELL T DAVIES

Helen Raynor), who have other commitments – gather around a table, and read through the script in front of the producers, heads of department, and the director, Dan Zeff. Andy has assembled a top-notch cast. Distinctively-voiced Marc Warren – who's playing Elton – sits opposite supernaturally young-looking Shirley Henderson (Ursula Blake), with Simon Greenall (Mr Skinner) next to her, and Moya Brady (Bridget) perched on the end there...

"It's the best cast that we could possibly have," announces Russell. "It's marvellous."

"Please read nice and loudly," adds fellow exec producer Julie Gardner, "cos this is a big room, and it's a brilliant script, so we want to hear every word."

AFTER THE READ-THROUGH, people mingle, and pick at the buffet, and head to the bar, where a delighted Russell sings the praises of Andy Pryor. "He's a genius," he enthuses, "cos it's a nightmare juggling actors, and their agents, and the cast, and the schedule. Mostly, we offer the big parts to whoever we think is best, sometimes to strangers. I mean, I don't think any of us have worked with Marc or Shirley before; we just hoped, and I think we've got lucky."

"I really loved the script," Dan tells me, over drinks, "from the moment that I read it, and I'm not just saying that to suck up to Russell. I've been a fan of his for ages, so it's great to get a chance to work on a script of his. I love his tone, and the kind of emotional centre of his scripts – they're funny, and light, and yet they're dealing with such heavy emotions. *Love & Monsters* is quite a special *Doctor Who*, I think, in that it's not the Doctor at the centre of it; the Doctor's kind of peripheral, although he's incredibly important to the whole strand."

It's 12 days since the read-through, and filming is underway in the ominously-named Impounding Station – a dirty, spacious, warehouse-like building on Newport Docks. David Tennant and Billie Piper are chasing a monster, with the buckets, and the water, and the shouting, and the screaming. "It's splashing me," cries David, when Billie lobs a bucketful over the monster.

"D'you want your trousers dried?" sighs a lady from wardrobe.

"It's okay. I've got two pairs of thermals on, so it hasn't soaked through."

"It's the best monster yet," Billie tells me, as we stand admiring the prosthetic spectacle. "For a cameo monster, the amount of effort that's gone into it is just incredible. Ha! My nails are like that," she teases, pointing at the creature's mouldy, spindly toenails. "I share my nails with that beast!"

As long as you don't share your teeth with it...

"I know! Look at all that drool," she laughs. "It's the most K-Y Jelly we've ever used. Hmm. Actually, maybe not."

"That last take was great," enthuses Dan Zeff. "This has a real deadpan quality about it."

"We're putting the realism back into *Doctor Who*," jokes David. "I wonder what people will make of this episode."

Dan chuckles. "Russell's first note at the production meeting was 'keep it real'!"

Interestingly, *Love & Monsters* was adapted from an idea that Russell had a couple of years ago for a **DWM** comic strip: the story of a man who lived through the Doctor's history without ever meeting him. "Like the *Zelig* of *Doctor Who*!" he exclaims. "The central character would start as a kid, having his third birthday evacuated by the army, because of the Dalek invasion of Shoreditch in the 1960s, then his mum would be killed by an Auton

▼ *Another monster is dealt with!*

▼ *The members of LINDA – not your average bunch of* ***Doctor Who*** *fans...*

Marc Warren

Hello, Marc.

How would you describe Elton Pope?
He could read as very sort of geeky, a bit eccentric, and you could have done silly voices, and crazy costumes, but Russell didn't want that: he was clear that he wanted a normal guy. Elton's a really nice, very discerning, sincere kind of man. He's quite sweet and simple, I suppose – not as in Forrest Gump simple, but kind of uncomplicated.

You're used to playing more edgy roles, aren't you?
Yeah, a bit crazier sort of characters, so to play somebody like Elton was a real change for me. But there was no fear of him being boring or bland, cos Russell had written this amazing script. It's kind of magical, isn't it? And really enchanting, I think. It's a beautiful, moving, funny story, and I hope we've captured that.

I've heard a rumour that you were an un-credited extra in the 1989 Doctor Who serial Battlefield...
No, I wasn't. I did extra work when I started out, in about 1986, and I've been an extra in some bizarre stuff, but not in *Doctor Who*.

Never mind. Have you ever been a member of a club or society like LINDA?
Um... I was a member of a youth theatre in Northampton when I was 12. Oh, and the Cubs. I was a Sixer in the Cubs. But then I did something naughty on camp one day, and I got demoted.

Oh yeah...?
I can't remember what I did. [Laughs] I just remember having a Sixer's woggle, and a week later I didn't! I got demoted back down to a Second. I probably didn't wash the dishes or something.

> "I was star-struck meeting Peter Kay. I was amazed he knew my name!"

I watched an episode of Hustle the other week, in which your character, Danny, is dropped naked in Trafalgar Square. Is there anything that you won't do for your art?
I used to think that I'd do anything for work; I don't think that now. There are certain things that I wouldn't do. I wouldn't do anything that harmed myself or anybody else – not just for the sake of a film or TV programme. In terms of running naked in London, that didn't bother me at all. Not that I had anything to show off...!

Do you enjoy being quite famous, Marc?
I don't think you get into acting to remain anonymous. There's always a bit of you that's fascinated by fame. I'm quite shy by nature, so it's also a bit of an icebreaker. You're a lot more approachable. But it doesn't really mean anything. I suppose it's like anything: once you actually get a bit of it, to whatever degree, it's never quite as appealing, is it?

Do you ever get star-struck?
I was star-struck meeting Peter Kay. Yeah, completely. I couldn't really speak when he first came on; I just kind of smiled a lot. I was about to say to him, 'Hello, Peter, my name's Mark, and I'm a real fan of yours, and I just think you're fantastic,' but then he came up to me first. He said, 'It's lovely to meet you, and I've got all the DVD box sets of *Hustle*,' and it completely... well, I just couldn't... I was absolutely amazed that he knew my name! It was a lovely surprise."

What were the best and worst things about working with Peter?
I've never met anybody like him. It was an absolute blessing to meet him. He was brilliant and inventive in a chaotic genius kind of way. I was enamoured. I couldn't keep my eyes off him. He amazed me. In six days, I must have used about ten years' quota of laughter, and he knew that he had me at his mercy. Literally, whatever he said... I mean, I was laughing so much at times that I couldn't breathe, and I was crying, and make-up had to keep wiping my eyes. It got to a point where I started to panic – quite honestly – because it was a tight schedule, and we had to get it done, but I couldn't look Peter in the eyes without laughing. I tried to look slightly to the side of him, and then I tried the old 'thinking of something sad' routine... I was just trying anything to get through it.

Is it important to get on with your co-stars, then?
It's not a requirement, but it makes it a lot more enjoyable. It was a quick shoot – it took just two weeks – and it was a game of two halves for me: the first week was largely me on my own – I spent the first two days just talking to camera – and then Shirley came in, and then, in the second week, the group got together, and the way that we all got on sort of captured the spirit of the episode, I feel. There was a sweet almost naivety about us. If we've captured that, it'd be fantastic.

One final question: could you ever fall in love with a paving stone?
No.

daffodil, and as a teenager he'd see the Skarasen rise out of the Thames, and so on. I ran that past Clay [Hickman, **DWM** Editor] ages ago, but never got round to doing anything about it. Too late now: I've cannibalised it!"

The episode appears to be a satire of *Doctor Who* fandom, but Russell isn't so sure.

"I think people presume that it's a satire when something is merely referenced," he says. "Yes, it dramatises aspects of fandom, with a few jokes – but that doesn't make it a satire. A satire would be much more vicious... LINDA sitting around for three years analysing the Doctor's toenail, only to discover that they've got the wrong Doctor, that sort of thing! Satire's quite easy. Students do satire. I had something else to say. This is honestly about fandom in general – everyone's a fan of something – and it's a tribute to it. The point about LINDA is that they forget the Doctor after a while, and make friends. They're genuinely good mates. That's what good fandom does. It's real passion, and connection, and fun. And that's not said often enough. Poor Victor is more of a Super-Fan, only interested in the Doctor at the exclusion of all else. As a result, he spoils it for everyone else."

▼ *Elton Pope (Marc Warren)*

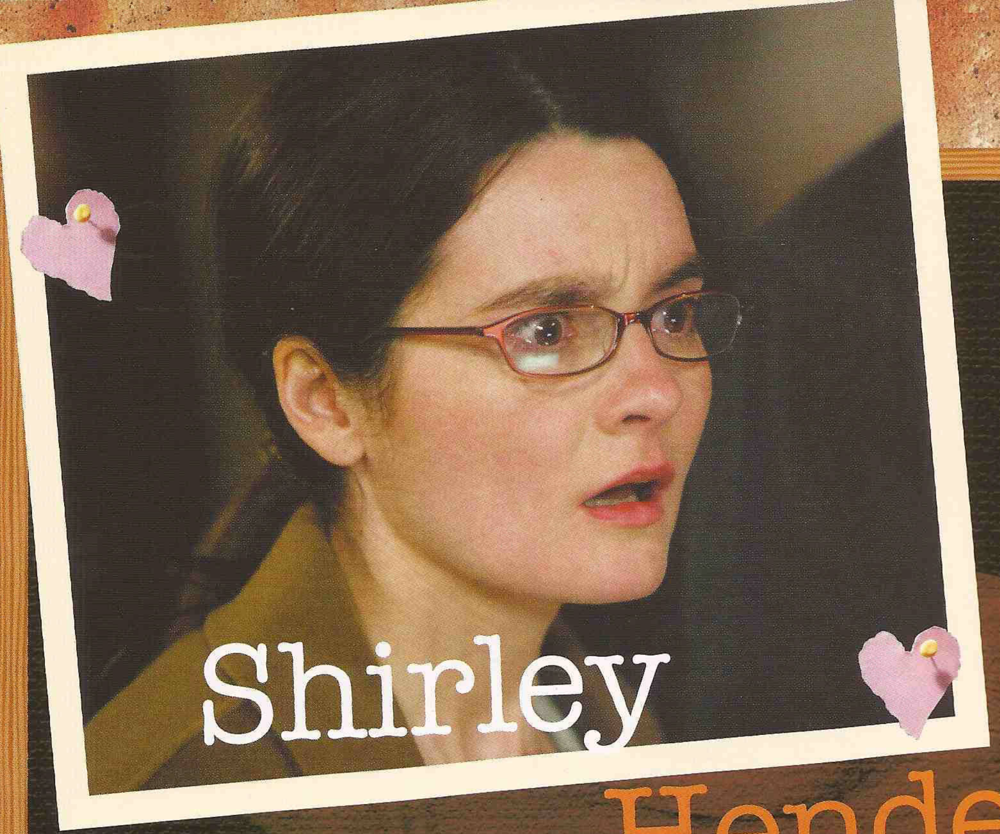
AFTER LUNCH, THE CREW MOVES to a Cardiff backstreet, where Elton is to be chased by the Abzorbaloff. "I'll be glad to see the back of this costume," proclaims a familiar voice, as a native of the planet Clom – all green, and revolting, and fit to burst – climbs out of a people carrier. "Two hours it took me to get this off last night."

Ladies and gentlemen, Peter Kay has arrived on set. "Who are you?" he asks, pointing at me.

"I'm from **Doctor Who Magazine**," I tell him.

"The what magazine? Oh, right. You look the part."

"Nice to meet you." ▶



Shirley Henderson

Hello, Shirley. You turned 40 last year, but you still look about 12. What's your secret?
Playing a ghost is one secret! [Shirley plays Moaning Myrtle in the *Harry Potter* films] It's CGI, isn't it? If you saw me for real, you'd know my age! [Laughs] I dunno, my mum was young-looking, and she's tiny, so maybe my height makes people think I'm younger than I am...?

Fair enough. How would you sell Ursula Blake in a lonely-hearts ad?
A nice girl. Enthusiastic. Quite private, I think. Probably a little bit lonely. Cast as a bit of an oddball by society, but comfortable with the right people... so I'm looking for similar!

Is she really most likely to fight back?
Of course! [Laughs] Even though it's only a 45-minute episode, there are lots of layers to Ursula. There's more to her than just being smiley and good. I don't think she has a bad side as such, but she has a jealous side – she's jealous of Elton spending time with Jackie – which I suppose isn't a fantastic quality. She's quite hidden. She may have her own secrets. Everybody has a darker side. Even good people have wants and needs, which make them richer and rounder characters. I've never really played clean-cut goodies or baddies. Every character has a dirty, slightly seedy side, or a darker, harder edge.

> "I loved it that Ursula didn't fade away forever. There's a wee bit of hope."

Talking of hard edges, what do you make of Ursula's unusual fate?
I loved it! It's cute. I loved that she didn't fade away forever. She and Elton are still together at the end, so there's a wee hint of hope there. When I read the script, and saw that she'd be turned into a paving stone, my reaction was: 'How will they do it?' Apart from physically how, I thought, 'How will they make you believe that that's possible?' But I didn't think how uncomfortable it would be. [Laughs] I had to move my face in a... well, it's kind of like a mask, but it's welded on to you, and you're clamped, literally, into this piece of pavement... obviously not an actual paving stone, but a prosthetic that was built around my head, and pleated all over my skin. It's physically quite difficult.

Could you ever fall in love with a paving stone?
Well, I'm quite attached to flagstones, so probably, yes.

Are there any other inanimate objects with which you'd like to have a torrid affair?
A torrid affair? Hmm, let me think. Ooh, my pencil! I've a very favourite drawing pencil.

What's the most interesting thing that you've Abzorbed?
A piece of cotton wool that I put up my nose, and breathed in. It got lodged in the back of my throat.

Please explain.
It came out through my mouth. I did it to see if it all joined up. I was young.

Had you watched Doctor Who much before appearing in it?
I saw some of the last series, and I enjoyed it very much. That's partly why I wanted to do it. The stories are interesting. This script was wonderful. It's so well written by Russell. It's slightly cartoon-ish, isn't it? You have to take it seriously, but you can't take it *too* seriously. I mean, the situation's ridiculous! I didn't watch it when I was a child: I found it too scary. But I'm a grown-up now, so I can cope with it this time around.

Can you ever overstep the mark when it comes to frightening kids?
I think children enjoy being scared. When I was little, we used to watch stuff with a cushion over our faces. You wanted to watch, but also you didn't want to, and there's a thrill in that. Also, *Doctor Who* appeals to adults. As with *Harry Potter*, it's not made for children exclusively. You can't have *Doctor Who* so un-scary that it doesn't work for adults. It's a fine balance, isn't it? Darkness is interesting. People like to see that side of life, and kids love it. I don't think it means that they'll want to go out and be monsters, or they're terrified for the rest of their life. But there's a wee thrill in that. That's what life's all about in the end.

◀ "You too," he smiles, and shakes my hand. I wish he hadn't. It's sticky and wet. "Don't worry," he says, "you can wipe it off afterwards. Just don't swallow."

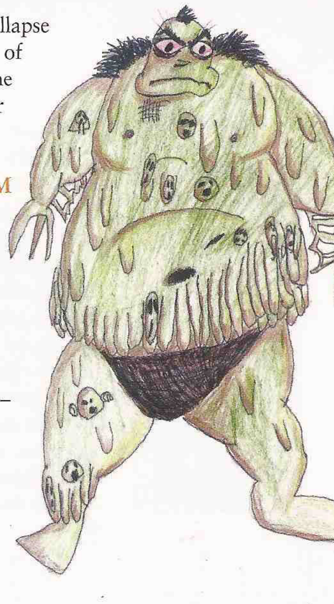
Peter is a surprisingly good sprinter. He gives Marc a run for his money, literally. "That was terrifying," chuckles Dan, after the first take.

"Terrifying?" exclaims Peter, catching his breath. "Terrifying?! All I'm doing is running, and wiggling me tongue. Mind you," he adds, peering up and down the street, "I'm a bit conspicuous."

"Can we go for one more take?" asks Dan.

"One more? Why not? Yeah, why not?" replies Peter. "It if were up to me, Dan, I'd do four or five more! You won't be laughing when I collapse from the heat. It takes it out of you, don't it? Shall we do one down the main road, just for a laugh?"

NINE-YEAR-OLD WILLIAM Grantham, the winner of *Blue Peter*'s 'Design a *Doctor Who* Monster' competition, designed the Abzorbaloff, which was brought to life by Neill Gorton and his team. Rob Mayor – one of Neill's boys – is by Peter's side always ("How many community hours you got left, Rob?" asks Peter), to ensure that he remains as comfortable as possible under the heavy Abzorbaloff prosthetic.



"I haven't even seen what it's like at the back," says Peter of his costume.

"Well, next time you're at the hairdressers," says Dan, "getting your mane done –"

"Have me mane done?" calls out Peter. "I thought you meant me in real life! You crossed a bit of a line. It's only me third day, Dan, and you're already at second base."

A couple of takes later, and it starts to chuck it down ("Here's the continuity rain that we ordered," deadpans Dan), and so the crew hurriedly completes the remaining shots, and the unit moves ("Unit move, my arse," shouts Peter.

"We can all bunk off now!") into the dry – if not particularly warm – basement of Jacob's Antique Centre, just around the corner. This is the location for LINDA's headquarters, and, for this afternoon, the scene where Victor is revealed to be – shock, horror – the Abzorbaloff...

"I'm not a great believer in plot twists," says Russell, "and hiding things from the audience. I don't like that 'game' aspect of writing. I think everyone should feel the whole thing – all going on the same ride together, cos storytelling is the most inclusive thing that you can do. On a practical side, given the amount of behind-the-scenes coverage, I was quite sure that every piece of pre-publicity would blow the surprise. But that's fine. It's a story, not a puzzle."

▲ *Peter Kay tries to ruin another take by making everyone laugh...*

> "I'm not a believer in hiding things from the audience. It's a story, not a puzzle." RUSSELL T DAVIES

"I think it's very clear from as soon as Victor arrives," adds Dan, "that he's the Abzorbaloff. I always thought that the audience would know that something daft is going on. When he asks the members of LINDA to stay behind, you know that something's happening, although it would have been nice if the audience hadn't seen the Abzorbaloff until we actually revealed him. But I don't think that was ever going to happen."

Dan explains to Peter that he might not be allowed to fly across the desk, and land on a crash mat, for the shot where he lunges forward and grabs Ursula by the wrist. "Ooh, he's got his health-and-safety head on now," mocks Peter. "Bloody hell, it's not that daring."

"Are you going to dive from sitting or standing?" asks the director.

"I haven't thought it through, Dan. I'll just see what fun we have with it."

Dan looks worried.

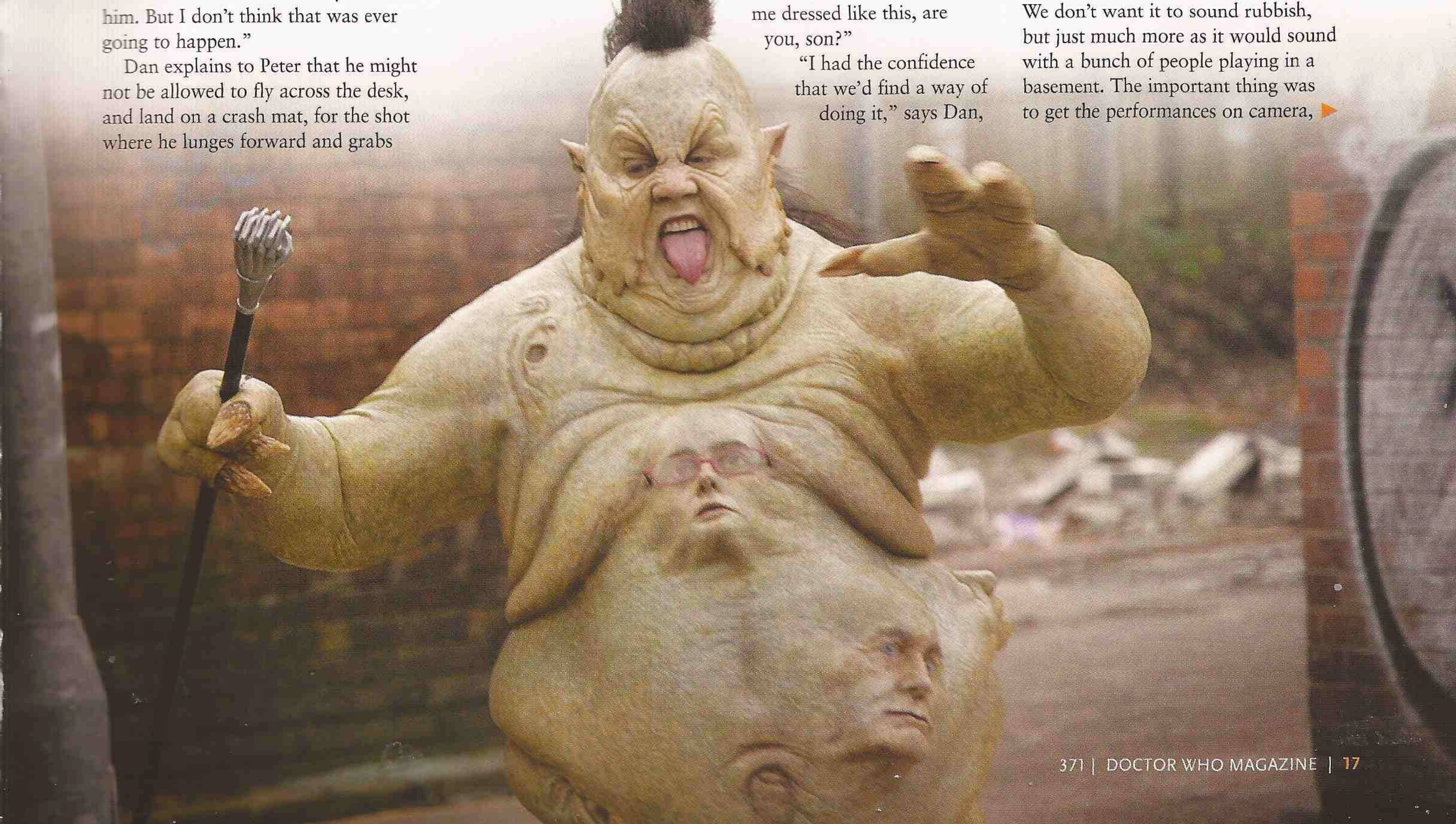
"I don't think," says Peter, "you're gonna disagree with me dressed like this, are you, son?"

"I had the confidence that we'd find a way of doing it," says Dan, when I ask him about the Abzorbaloff costume, and the human faces absorbed therein, "but it was great to know that there were experts around to have those conversations with."

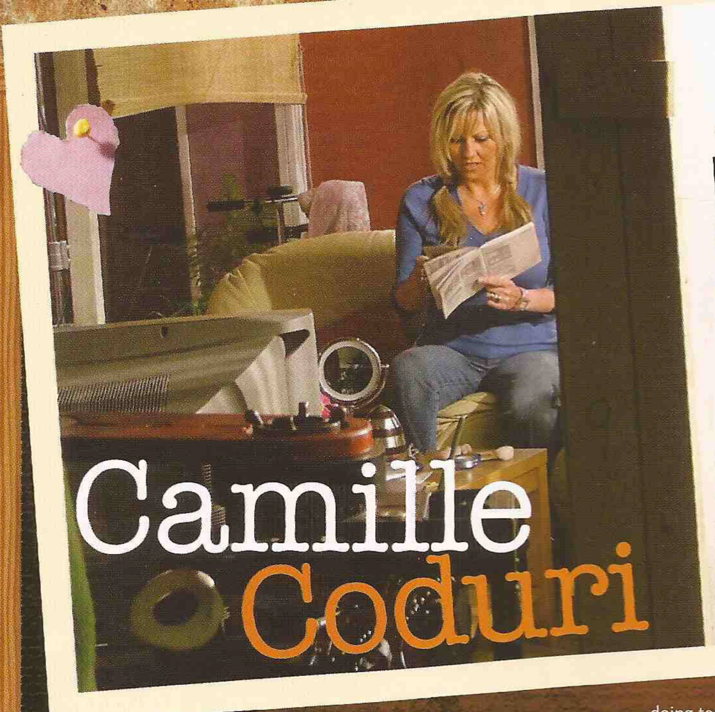
The Abzorbed faces on the Abzorbaloff's body are a combination of animatronics – radio-controlled heads in the suit – and computer-generated wizardry. "Where we can," explains Dan, "we've composited the actors' faces onto the suit, so although the suit has the heads of the characters built into it, it's kind of best when the Abzorbaloff's moving or running, or when you're on him for a long period, cos that's when we composite in the real faces. You have the proper skin effects within the costume, and I think it's very strong."

IT'S WEDNESDAY, 29 MARCH. THE basement of Jacob's Antique's is ringing out with the Electric Light Orchestra's *Don't Bring Me Down*. Marc is singing along, with Kathryn Drysdale (who plays Bliss) and Shirley on bass guitars and backing vocals, Moya on piano, and Simon on drums. Peter – now in full Victor costume – watches from behind the camera, bopping along.

"What we did on this," says Dan later, "was get Murray Gold, our composer, to do a version of that ELO track, but one that fits the kind of instruments that they were playing, and then we got Marc and the others into a recording studio to sing along to that, which then we overdubbed in the edit. We don't want it to sound rubbish, but just much more as it would sound with a bunch of people playing in a basement. The important thing was to get the performances on camera, ▶



▼ *Peter as the Abzorbaloff. Would you disagree with him dressed like that?!*



Camille Coduri

Hello, Camille. Love is... what exactly?
Growing old together. Definitely.

Talk me through your ideal romantic evening.
Ooh, it's got to be dinner on a tray in front of a great movie. Or breakfast in bed – I love that too. Having a chat, reading the paper... that's quite romantic. Going out for a romantic dinner? Nah, I'd much rather be at home with it on my lap. I've done so much in my lifetime; I'm quite tired out! How sad is that? I started going out when I was really quite young, so I suppose I'm making up for it now.

Have you ever Abzorbed anything interesting?
I think I breathed in a big fly once, which was quite upsetting.

I shouldn't think the fly was too happy about it either.
[Guffaws] It freaked me out, but it made me laugh, in retrospect. What else? At friends' parties, when it gets a bit silly at the end of the evening, I stick the odd carrot up my nose. I've Abzorbed a few of those in my time.

What's the best way to seduce Jackie Tyler?
She's quite a Leo about the whole thing, if you want to talk horoscope-wise – she's dominant, and brave, and fearless...

And a bit easy, no?
Ah, but she wouldn't see herself as that, I don't think. She'd see herself as very, very friendly. 'Why wait around for the man to ask you out? Why wait? I'll do it! What are you doing tomorrow night? Let's go out, baby!' She's so upfront – that's what I love about her. But I think she has to be. She doesn't want to get really serious with anybody, cos she's been on her own for so long, and Rose is the most important thing to her, not any of the boyfriends... until, I think, she meets Elton. At the back of her mind, maybe she's thinking, 'Ooh, he could be the one...?'

What was Marc Warren like to work with?
We'd worked together before. He strangled me once in an episode of *A Touch of Frost*, about 10 years ago, so it was like touching base, and he hadn't changed a bit. He's lovely, and gorgeous. We had a lot of fun, because Jackie gives him the big come-on. We laughed so much. She's so embarrassing, Jackie, isn't she? I love the way that this episode touched on the ordinary in an extraordinary way. I thought, 'Wow! This is really strange and beautiful.' It gives Jackie some interesting things to do. I was really moved by it.

> "We laughed so much! She's so embarrassing, Jackie, isn't she?"

◄ and then worry about the sound afterwards."

ELO's *Mr Blue Sky* and *Turned to Stone* are also used in the episode. Is Russell a bit of a fan, then?

"I am!" he says. "I love them! I mean, I couldn't name them, or even identify them on *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*; I've only got a Best Of album, but every song on it is brilliant. When we were filming, it's amazing how many people piped up and said, 'Actually, I like them.' It was the first thing Marc Warren said to me."

"It's funny," says Dan, "cos ELO were the first band that I got into, and I got into them really quite young, at the age of 11. It was before I properly got into music, but the first box set I bought was ELO. I brought my old records into the art department, and offered them to use as dressing, but they decided not to. I was a true, hardcore fan once upon a time."

And then, suddenly, darkness! There go the lights. (Can I kiss Peter now?) The door of the lift at the far end of the basement is thrown open – a rectangle of brilliant light, and a silhouette. The camera tracks in on Victor as he strides calmly into the room. Put big light on!

"Lights," bellows Peter, and they snap back on.

"Can you be a bit grander on the 'Lights'," Dan asks after the take, "as it's your first line? And could you recoil a bit when Mr Skinner goes to shake your hand? It's in defence."

"I were doing that at Russell's flat," protests Peter, "but he said it were too camp."

"It's a big baddie kind of entrance," Russell explains to me. "Explosive characters tend to explode onto the screen. Victor dramatises himself, and the simple key to that is registering that he's always, literally, in disguise. Once you add that element of dressing up – like the Slitheen inside their bodysuits, having fun – you can start to layer in a bit of flamboyance, because it's integral to the character. If Elton acted like that, the whole thing would fall apart."

"It was difficult," admits Dan, "to find a basement space that had a reasonably high ceiling – for logistical reasons, but also for this idea that [production designer] Edward Thomas had of hanging the lights from the ceiling so that we could really control the feel of each scene by what lights were on when. The light bulb effect! Ed is such a visionary. The idea was that it's quite a warm space at the beginning, but, when Victor arrives, it becomes a lot darker in the shadows, and stronger light over him."

"Behold!" cries Peter, reaching the end of his speech, and unfastening his coat to reveal a banana protruding from a rude place! Lots of laughter from the cast, and a ready-made anecdote should anybody here ever get invited to a *Doctor Who* convention.

"A little more reaction when Peter says 'Behold'," Dan tells LINDA.

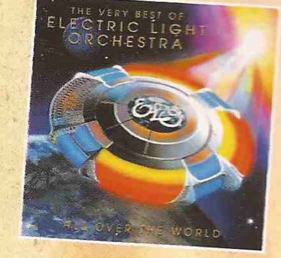
"What are we looking at when he does that?" asks Marc.

"I think his face," replies Dan, "not his... thing down there! I imagined Victor as nastier," he continues, turning to Peter, "but I prefer the way that you're doing it. That's good. I believe more that they're going to like you."

"Peter was a lot of fun to direct," Dan tells me later. "I've worked a lot with comedians, and when the camera isn't switched on, in the downtime moments, there's definitely a lot of fun going on, which is hard as a director, because you want to laugh, and you want to join in, but you have to stay focussed on the job. You've still got a ticking clock, and an enormous amount to get through. You can feel a bit like a schoolteacher sometimes, but it's fun, and it's nice to have that atmosphere.

▲ *Top: The Abzorbaloff gets comfortable in Victor's chair...*

▼ *The soundtrack to this episode is available in all good music shops. Sadly not on BBC Records and Tapes.*



▲ Top left: Mr Skinner (Simon Greenall)

▲ Above: Victor makes a 'big baddie entrance'.

I directed Peter as I would any other actor, and he responded very well. Lots of people said to me what a special shoot it was."

THOUGH THE SCRIPT POKES FUN at the members of LINDA, the viewers can't help but like and empathise with them. Russell says: "I think that's very true, though. Of life, I mean. Friendship is a lot more complicated than just liking someone all the time. You can spend a lot of time hating your mates. We all have friends, and lovers, and family, but we poke fun at them all the time – every single one of them. So I do the same with whatever I write. There's no single view of someone, characters don't exist in a solid state, you can think three different things simultaneously... That's what writing should do: keep shifting, never settle."

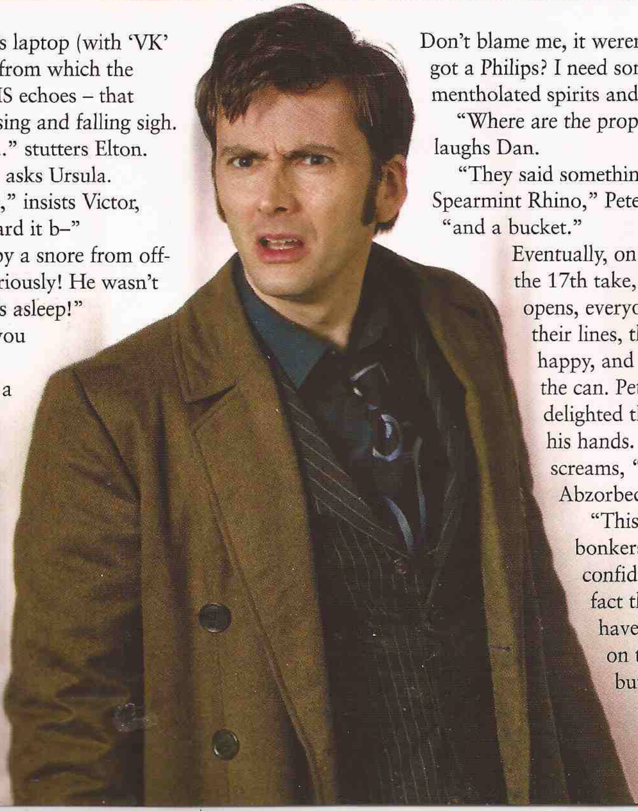
The assembled members of LINDA are gazing at Victor's laptop (with 'VK' insignia on the lid), from which the sound of the TARDIS echoes – that strange, old, new, rising and falling sigh. "That's... oh, that's..." stutters Elton.

> "It's a funny episode, but the humour isn't forced; it's observational – and real." DAN ZEFF

"What's wrong?" asks Ursula.

"Leave him alone," insists Victor, greedily "You've heard it b–"

He's interrupted by a snore from off-camera. A snore! Seriously! He wasn't expecting that. "He's asleep!" hollers Peter. "Can you believe that?"



Halfway through a pivotal scene, and a certain crewmember – who'd best remain nameless – has fallen asleep! He's nudged awake by a colleague. "I thought it was a train going past," laughs a gaffer.

"I'm sure he's very apologetic," declares Susie Liggat, the first assistant director, "and someone's going to get him a coffee straight away...!"

On the second take, Peter can't open the laptop lid. Nor on the third take. Or the fourth. "What's happening?" he says, frustrated. "Have I broken it? Don't blame me, it weren't me! Anyone got a Philips? I need some mentholated spirits and a scourer."

"Where are the props boys?" laughs Dan.

"They said something about Spearmint Rhino," Peter shrugs, "and a bucket."

Eventually, on something like the 17th take, the laptop lid opens, everyone remembers their lines, the director is happy, and the scene is in the can. Peter is so delighted that he claps his hands. "Argh," he screams, "I just Abzorbed myself!"

"This episode is bonkers," states Dan, confidently. "The fact that you can have such emotion on the one hand, but also this mad storyline with the Abzorbaloff. It's not knockabout comedy. It's not a *Carry On* film. I'm always wary of overdoing it, and I don't change my directing style because it's comedy. You let the actors do it, and you let the action happen. It's a funny episode, but the humour isn't forced; it's observational, and real, not geeky. It ends up being an incredibly moving piece."

The conclusion to *Love & Monsters* is as poignant as it is daft. How bizarre can *Doctor Who* get before the audience starts saying, 'C'mon, that's just *too* far!?

"Well, *I* decide, not the audience," considers Russell, "to be blunt! It does make me laugh, cos I've had about 57 letters saying, 'How can Adam be left in 2012 with an info-spike in his forehead?', so God knows how they'll cope with Ursula being turned into a paving stone, and continuing her relationship with Elton! But the ending does what it should, which is take the central concept and extend it to its full imagination. That's one of my jobs on *Doctor Who*: to extend its remit, to take its imagination further, all the time, beyond sci-fi, into all sorts of storytelling. Not for fandom – they probably won't like it, cos they'll wonder why UNIT doesn't arrest Ursula or something – but for the millions of new viewers. This takes *Doctor Who* into the realm of Roald Dahl, I think: that strange fantasy-and-punishment world that he creates – like there's a price for wonderful things, and that good things can come out of terrible circumstances. It's evocative, and strange – and that's pure *Doctor Who*." DWM

that Peter Kay THING!

So you've made it as a stand-up comedian, written and starred in your own award-winning sitcom, and reached Number One in the pop charts. How do you top all that? Why, by playing a monster in *Doctor Who*, of course! **Peter Kay** lures **Benjamin Cook** into his trailer for an Abzorbing chat...

▶ *Main picture: Peter Kay as the Abzorbaloff!*

▶ *Far right: Peter in his other* **Love & Monsters** *role as Victor Kennedy.*

YOU ARE NEVER TOO famous or too successful to write a fan letter. After watching *Doctor Who* last year, award-winning comedian Peter Kay wrote to Russell T Davies, *Doctor Who*'s executive producer, to say how much he'd enjoyed the series...

"I loved it," nods Peter, "because it had emotion, and it had humour, and it didn't send itself up, but it didn't take itself too seriously. It's opened up *Doctor Who* to millions of people that would never have gone near it with a bargepole, cos they'd consigned it to the bin, really. I think that – in a George Lucas kind of father-figure way – the love and enthusiasm that Russell had for the project filtered down into everybody else. That's what makes it so special. It's a massive achievement, and I wrote the letter to Russell just to let him know.

"I was saying to you the other day," he continues, referring to our chat on set yesterday, "when we were in bed together – you left your shoes, I didn't want to mention it – I was saying to you then that in life, if you do like something, or you do admire somebody, I think you should write 'em a letter, because that adulation remains within you, and you'll always carry it around, and you'll tell your friends, but sometimes it's nice to let the person know too. I'd never met Russell – can I call him Russell? Ha, like I know him! – but I thought what he'd done was fantastic. I mean, when *Doctor Who* was coming back, everybody thought it was gonna be like [the BBC remake of] *Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)*, which is, thankfully, now deceased, cos it weren't any good in first place! You don't remake a programme that's no good to kick off with. But *Doctor Who* was different. Russell knew what he was doing."

DWM interviews Peter in his trailer during a break in filming *Doctor Who* – except he drops his 'h's, so it's '*Doctor Ooh*' – and he's still in costume as villainous Victor, minus the facial hair. "My voice is a bit croaky," he apologises, "cos I've been shouting all morning, saying, 'You froze, you stupid man,' and 'Ursula Blake, most likely to fight back.' Ha! It's a fantastic script."

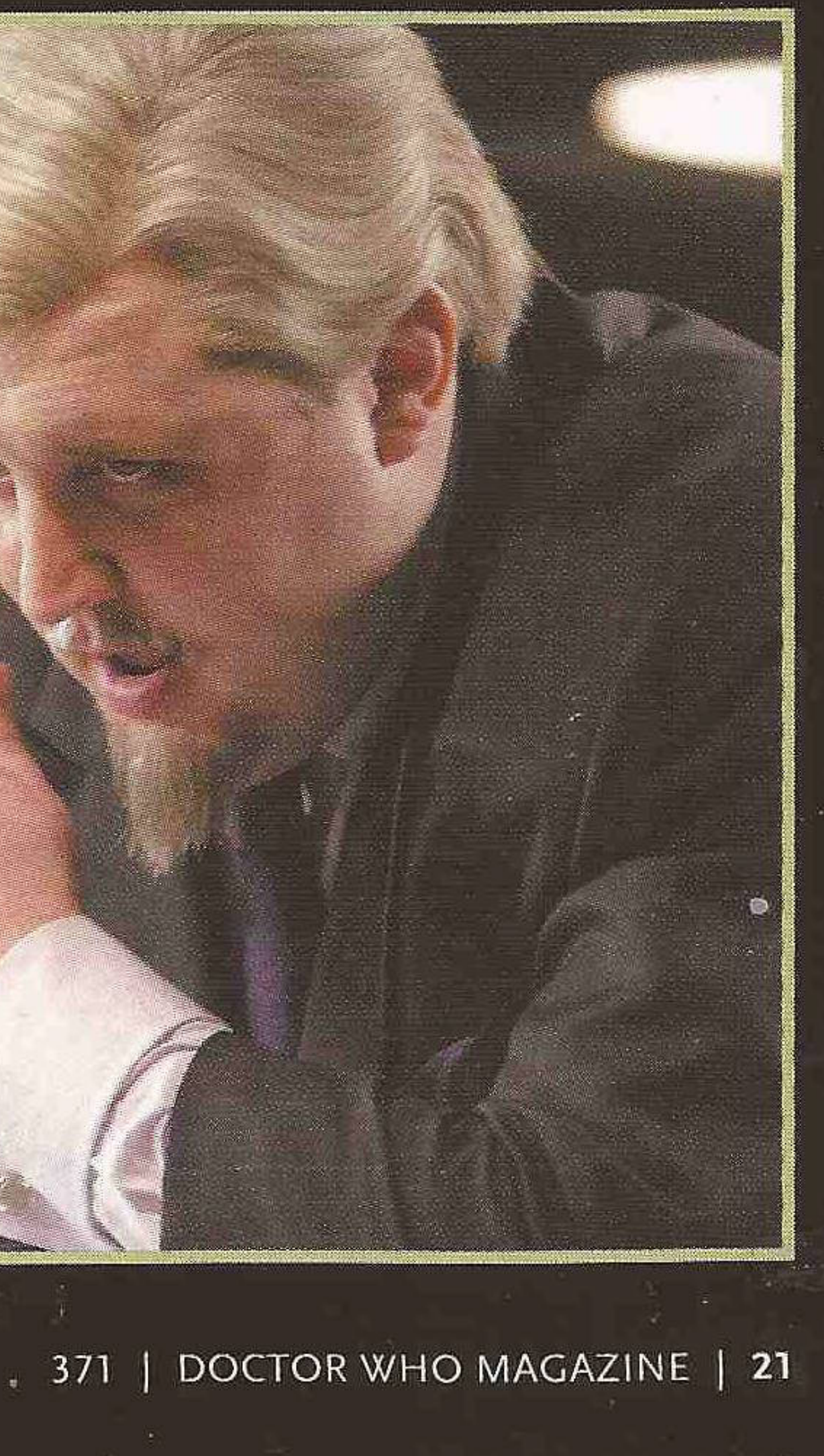
Peter sits in an armchair, polishing off his lunch ("There's no jam in this," he asserts, poking his roly-poly with a fork. "It's just poly!"), and I perch on the settee. It's several minutes before it dawns on him: this isn't his trailer. "Mine's next door!" he realises. "I've come in the wrong one! I didn't know. Um, whose trailer is this, then?"

Articles about Peter invariably describe his comedy style as 'northern', 'observational', 'affectionate', and 'unique'. He's also been called 'one of the funniest men in Britain', and – in review after review – a 'comic genius'. Off stage, he's gracious, down-to-earth, but still naturally funny, and full of enthusiasm for *Doctor Ooh*!

"It's not like anything that I've ever done before," he says, "which is great. It were last June that I wrote to Russell, and I didn't hear back til September, and he mentioned this *Blue Peter* competition to design a monster. 'I'm trying to make the episode special,' he said. 'Would you be interested? I'd love you to do it.' I immediately rang him back – he were watching *Cash in the Attic* – and said, 'I'd love to do it!' We originally discussed me playing Elton, but I said, 'I'd love to do something different, cos I've always played this UFO-spotter type – a bit nerdy, kind of.' I did a thing in *Coronation Street*, and they're very similar parts. I've not got a problem with that... but really, let's be honest, if you're gonna be in *Doctor Who*, you either wanna be Doctor Who or a baddie! Know what I mean? And Russell said, 'Why not? Have a go.' I said, 'I won't let you down.' And I've loved it. I've absolutely loved it. I've just texted [producer] Phil Collinson and said, 'It's been like a holiday this week.' It has, it's been really good fun. I've really enjoyed myself, and it's not often you can say that. In all fairness, I don't do much acting in other people's things, because either I don't get offered any, or they're not much good when I am. But to look back and say that I did something as iconic as this...!"

When Peter's casting was announced, back in March, rumours abounded that he'd be playing the Abzorbaloff, the winning entry in the *Blue Peter* competition. For once, the rumours were entirely true. "How often do you get to dress up like an alien, and run through the streets of Cardiff?" grins Peter, finishing off his poly. "I don't know what you do in your social life, Ben? You might do that all the time? You might say, 'Every Saturday, Pete!' But I loved it. I did *The Catherine Tate Show* last year, so Neill Gorton [special make-up artist] already had a prosthetic of the top half of my body, and I said to Russell, 'Well, that's still in storage, so maybe we could...?' If you're gonna wear something like that, you can't go into it half-cocked. You've gotta be in it and loving it, and giving it your all."

It would have been more obvious, perhaps, to play the monster with a traditional RP accent, and use Peter's natural accent for Victor. Instead, he plumped for the other way round, which really works. "Exactly right," says Peter. "I went to Russell's house when I got the script, and we sat and chatted through it, and he said, 'I think it'll work that way round.' It's like



▲ *Ursula Blake (Shirley Henderson) finds herself in the Abzorbaloff's clutches...*

almost doing two completely different characters... well, it is. They're not similar in any way. I quite like that. That's it framed forever now – you know, done. When it's all edited, it's something that I'll be really proud to look back on, and remember the week that I had doing it."

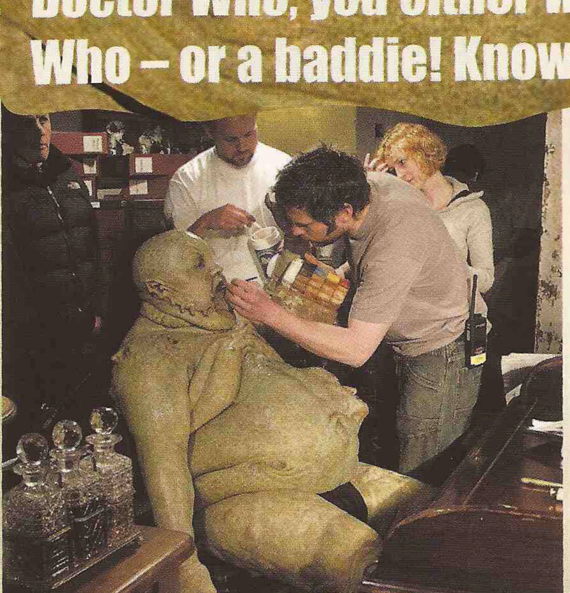
Peter once said, "To me, stand-up comedians are far superior actors; get the right stand-ups and they're better or at least the same as actors. They've got a sense of realness about them." Does it bother him, then, that a lot of people will be surprised that he can act?

"Not really," he shrugs. "I don't really want to do straight acting. The thing about Victor is that it's serious, and menacing, but there's slight comedy in there – like the skin complaint – and I like that. I said to Russell, 'Look, I can't do this seriously, but I can do my best. You're always going to suffer from me being a comedian in it.' But as long as you do it well, as long as it's believable to a certain degree, people will accept it. The thing is, you've just gotta please yourself. You can't please everybody. The most important person is myself, and I wanna do *Doctor Who*. I don't wanna worry about whether people think, 'Ooh, he's a stand-up comedian, so he shouldn't be doing it,' cos I know, when they see it, that they won't see a stand-up comedian. When you do stand-up, that's an act..."

Even when you're on stage, that's a persona?

"Well, yeah. The whole routine's an act. It's not all scripted, but you know roughly where you're going with it – you know what you're gonna talk about. In a way, that's a façade, that's acting, and so is *Doctor Who*. I were talking to Simon Greenall, who plays Mr Skinner, and he said that in the 1980s, if you were in *Doctor Who*, you didn't really advertise it, cos you were a bit ashamed of it. It's a testament to how good it is now, and how successful it has become, that people wanna be in it. I know that people like Maureen Lipman and Pauline Collins have been cast in parts; I don't know whether I'm the first one who's actually written a letter. Ha! I didn't write a letter asking for a part; I just wrote a letter saying I like the show, but maybe now more people will step forward and say, 'I'd like to be in it.' I don't think it should turn into like a guest-spot programme, and I don't want it to – you know, watch it just to see who's gonna be in it this week. But you'll never please everybody. All these diehard fans will probably think it's sacrilegious that I'm in it, cos I'm a comedian. But they'd soon step over me to get to play the Abzorbaloff! So get in't queue! I'm not stupid. I'm not turning down the chance to spend five-and-a-half hours putting a costume on, and two hours to get it off at a night!"

"Let's be honest, if you're gonna be in Doctor Who, you either wanna be Doctor Who – or a baddie! Know what I mean?"



▼ *Peter gets his teeth seen to...*

And Peter has high hopes for an Abzorbaloff action figure. "Given that it's the BBC," he laughs, "it'll probably hit the shops in about 18 months! It'll be on BBC Two in the afternoons by the time the figures are out."

What, then, is the strangest thing that Peter has Abzorbed in real life?

"I got a piece of paper stuck in my ear once," he confesses, after some thought. "I tried cheating on me chemistry exam, and I'd seen [comedy movie] *Spies Like Us* and thought, 'There's a scene where they're cheating in an exam, Chevy Chase and Dan Aykroyd, and they write down the answers,' so I wrote down the answers

▲ *Peter as nightclub owner Brian Potter in his award-winning* ***Phoenix Nights.***

► *Right and below: As über-fan Victor Kennedy, and an alien from the planet Clom.*

to me chemistry exam on a tiny piece of paper. But I didn't know where I should put it, so I put it in my ear – and it rolled into me head! I ended up going to hospital. That's true. It backfired. But it actually didn't: cos I had to go A&E, and I missed the exam, so it kind of worked out for the best anyway."

I wonder what Peter's family will make of his turn as the Abzorbaloff. Is his two-year-old son, Charlie, old enough to watch *Doctor Who*?

"No," Peter smiles. "He watched it last year, and he was only one, and he saw the Slitheen, and it upset him a bit. So I've kind of shielded him from it. I tape it and watch it later at night. I showed my wife some photographs of the Abzorbaloff, and she said, 'That's horrible!' It doesn't look like me, but it's still horrible, cos it's disgusting, so you can't dispute that. But Charlie won't see it. He's too young, and I think it'd mess him up for life. But when he's about seven or eight..."

You'll sit him down and say, "Son, there's something I've got to tell you"?

"Yeah, I'll sit him down and say, 'This is what I used to do before I went bankrupt! This is where it all went wrong, son. This is where the first crack appeared, and the decline started – it was with the Abzorbaloff. The Abzorbaloff Abzorbed me career.' Ha!"

PETER WAS BORN IN 1973, IN THE northern industrial town of Bolton – 'his beloved Bolton,' according to the BBC website – where he still lives with his wife, Susan, and Charlie. Indeed, the public perception is of a man who's in love with his hometown, but, perhaps surprisingly, Peter refutes this. His family keeps him in Bolton, he says, but that's all. "It's not patriotism: it's just where I've been brought up," he says. "My life's there, and my family's there, but I'm not there for Bolton itself. If my family were in Bristol, I'd be in Bristol. I think Woody Allen said, 'You've got to write about what you know,' and that's the thing – that's all I know, and that's all I can write about. I can't write about 1930s Chicago, because I don't know anything about it. It's the same with stand-up. You just hope that people can relate to it."

How, then, would he define his so-called northern humour?

"I wouldn't call it 'northern'," he admits. "I just call it 'funny'. I mean, I don't know if I'd be as funny if I were from Scotland, or Newcastle, or Ireland, I don't know, but I think if you're funny, you're funny. If I were as funny and successful, and from Scotland, they'd go, 'Ah ha, that's Scottish humour.' But it's not. Comedy travels. If it's funny, it can translate – any language, people get it. The only reason it's northern is through fate. That's where I were brought up, and that's the way I speak, and me accent's probably my best asset. And here I am playing Victor Kennedy not in my accent. Ha! But you've got to try to stretch yourself, and reach for new things, and do things that are different, cos you can always look back and think, 'That worked, and that didn't.' That's the good thing about this showbiz lark."

Peter left school with almost no qualifications – one GCSE in Art – and drifted from one dead-end job to another. He was a cinema usher, a toilet-roll packer, a barman at a bingo hall, and even a mobile disc jockey, amongst other jobs – many of which would later inspire episodes of his critically-acclaimed series *That Peter Kay Thing*. "I didn't have a grand plan. People used to say to me, 'What do you want to do?', and I'd say, 'I don't know.' It's not that I didn't want to do anything: it's that I wanted to do so much. I mean, I wanted to do everything – I wanted to write, and direct, and produce, and do stand-up, and write musicals – and I still do. I can't play an instrument, but I still want to write musicals."

Within a year of launching himself onto the stand-up circuit, Peter won the 1997 Channel Four *So You Think You're Funny?* contest. From there, his rise to the top has been rapid: sell-out tours (the DVDs of which have earned him millions); cameos in *Coronation Street* and movies such as *24 Hour Party People* and *The League of Gentlemen's Apocalypse*; advertisements for John Smith's bitter (despite the fact that he doesn't drink; his father, Mick, died of alcoholism); the music video for a re-release of Tony Christie's 1971 hit *(Is This the Way to) Amarillo* in aid of *Comic Relief*, which propelled the single to the top of the UK charts for seven consecutive weeks; even presenting a segment of last year's Live 8 concert, in London, singing a cappella for a global audience of millions. Was he nervous?

"Oh well, yeah, God, you would be slightly," he chuckles, loudly. "There are only a few million people watching, and 200,000 in Hyde Park. Yeah, a touch nervous! You'd have to be made of iron

▲ *Above left: The Abzorbaloff in hot pursuit of Elton (Marc Warren).*

▲ *Peter Kay with co-star and co-writer Patrick McGuinness in* ***Phoenix Nights*** *spin-off* ***Max & Paddy's Road to Nowhere****.*

not to get nervous. But it was an amazing experience. It was surreal. You never believe that you're doing these things. At every step of my career, I'm forever going, 'I can't imagine it getting any better than this.' I've been saying that for nearly ten years now. 'God, I can't believe I won this stand-up competition,' and then, ten years later, 'I can't believe I'm doing *Doctor Who*!' It's unbelievable."

PETER'S MOST POPULAR WORK to date must surely be *Phoenix Nights*, a sitcom set in a failing Bolton nightclub, in which Peter plays multiple roles, in addition to co-writing and directing. "But I don't really wanna be pigeoned," he insists. "I don't want people saying, 'He just does acting, he just does things like *The Bill*, he just does music, he just does stand-up...' I don't see why you can't have a go at doing anything – I mean, if you've got the opportunity. I just do what I wanna do. That's just life, innit? You bounce from one thing to another, and hopefully the things that you're bouncing off are things that you enjoy, or are proud of."

"I'll sit my son down, and say 'This is where it all went wrong, son. The Abzorbaloff Abzorbed me career!' Ha!"

What makes Peter laugh?

"Not a lot of things, really. I like making people laugh, as you can probably tell on the set. I'm not saying I'm miserable: it's just not a lot of things make me really laugh – friends mainly, and real life, but not a lot of telly. *Harry Hill's TV Burp* makes me laugh a lot. Now, that is the only programme I've seen for a long, long time that makes me laugh out loud."

Does Peter feel there's an expectation to make people laugh off stage?

"Oh yeah, of course there is, cos that's the image that you send out to the public. When people see you, they treat you like you're their friend. I don't mind. It's a blessing and a curse, cos you're out with your family, and people approach you – they're quite forward – but they're always nice. It's not like you're playing a paedophile on *The Bill*, where you get people who're whacking you round the head with an handbag! I'm very much the same as I am on stage, in a way. I'm just a bit quieter, obviously, and, when I'm on set, I'll be a bit louder and brasher. That's probably an insecurity thing. I like everyone else to have a laugh. If you've got discipline, and a good crew, I don't see why you can't have a lot of fun along the way – and the crew here are really nice. That's why I only ever shoot five days. I don't do 11-day fortnights, cos the fatigue kicks in, and it's like a cancer that spreads through the crew. It's counterproductive.

"In fact, when I did my last series [*Phoenix Nights* spin-off *Max & Paddy's Road to Nowhere*], we had a better time filming it than it actually turned out! I just loved the shoot, I had a lovely time with the crew, we laughed a lot, and we enjoyed ourselves, and it was a great atmosphere. That's what *Max & Paddy* felt like, and that's what *Doctor Who* has felt like – more so for me on this, actually, cos I've not had any of that pressure of directing, or CGI line-up shots, none of that. It's all taken away from me, and that's why I've enjoyed it. I've enjoyed being with Shirley Henderson [who plays Ursula], and Marc Warren [Elton]. And meeting David and Billie was fantastic. I just wish it could have been longer, but this episode should probably be called *Doctor Where?*, rather than *Doctor Who*, cos that's all he's in it for!"

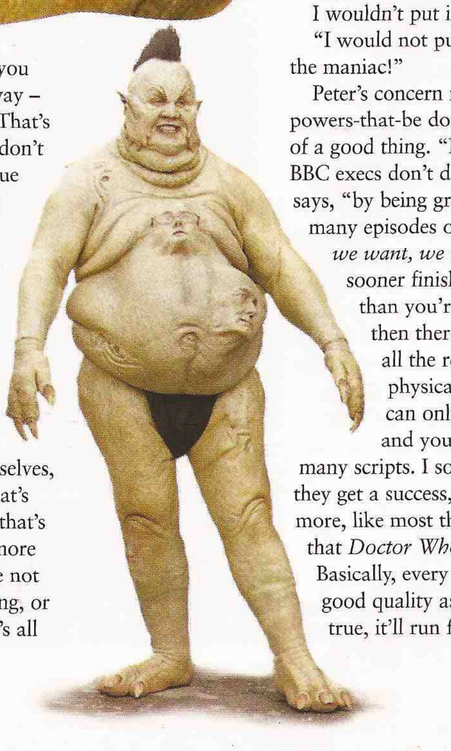
Was Peter already a fan of the show?

"I were never an absolute massive *Doctor Who* fan," he considers, but then he changes his mind: "Well, I were! But I couldn't name things like true fans could name things. But I still loved it, and I used to go to *Doctor Who*'s box in Blackpool, and I got me photograph taken outside when I were six, and – I'm terribly proud of this – I've still got the *Doctor Who* theme on me 7-inch, with *Reg* [the signature tune from the BBC African Service] on the B-side by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop! I always used to imagine, when I were a kid, that Tom Baker were playing it."

I wouldn't put it past him.

"I would not put it past him at all, the maniac!"

Peter's concern now is that the powers-that-be don't demand too much of a good thing. "I just hope that the BBC execs don't destroy the show," he says, "by being greedy, and wanting too many episodes on demand – *we want, we want, we want!* You've no sooner finished the second one than you're onto the third, and then there's *Torchwood*, and all the rest, and you can only physically do so much. You can only go to so many dubs, and you can only write so many scripts. I sometimes think, when they get a success, they want more and more, like most things, and I just hope that *Doctor Who* doesn't go that way. Basically, every episode should be as good quality as this one! If that's true, it'll run for years." DWM



DOCTOR · WHO

BROADCAST
Saturday 24 June 2006, BBC One

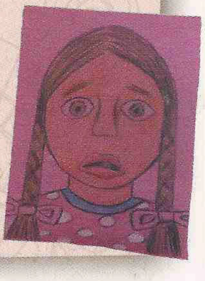
WRITER
Matthew Graham

DIRECTOR
Euros Lyn

STARRING
David Tennant, Billie Piper, Nina Sosanya, Abisola Agbaje, Abdul Salis, Tim Faraday, Edna Doré

IN A NUTSHELL
All is not well in suburban London, 2012. The Doctor and Rose arrive in Dame Kelly Holmes Close to discover a community in no mood to celebrate the imminent Olympics. The locals' deep unease seems to stem from Chloe Webber, a 12-year-old girl with a talent for worryingly life-like sketches. And what, exactly, is lurking in her wardrobe?

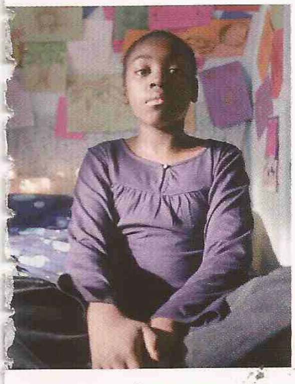
QUOTE, UNQUOTE
THE DOCTOR: *Fear. Loneliness. They're the big ones, Rose. And some of the most terrible acts ever committed have been inspired by them.*



TV PREVIEW

EPISODE 11:

FEAR HER



▲ *Top: The Doctor examines Chloe Webber (Abisola Agbaje)...*

▲ *Above: Could one little girl really destroy the world?*

"THIS EPISODE'S ORIGINAL TITLE WAS *Chloe Webber Destroys the Earth!*" laughs Matthew Graham, *Fear Her* scribe and co-creator/lead writer of BBC One's popular *Life on Mars*. "Russell [T Davies, *Doctor Who*'s executive producer] thought it was the funniest thing he'd ever heard! He e-mails like he talks, so every now and then I'd get a message saying, '*Chloe Webber Destroys the Earth*. Marvellous! Hooray! Bless you!"

Perhaps because it wouldn't fit across TV screens, *Chloe Webber Destroys the Earth* didn't last. "Suddenly, out of the blue, Russell said it was a bit of a mouthful," says Matthew. "So then it became *You're a Bad Girl, Chloe Webber* – but of course that was still too long! I'd keep suggesting things and he'd say, 'No, that's not a *Doctor Who* title'. When I suggested *Fear Her*, he said he liked it, but it still wasn't *quite* a *Doctor Who* title. He said, 'Let's leave it, and see whether we forget about it or it still bugs us.' Because we then forgot about it, we decided it must work!"

Selecting a title was, naturally, the icing on the cake of the usual story development process. Matthew recalls his initial August 2005 dinner with Russell and his fellow executive producer Julie Gardner.

"At that time, we weren't entirely sure whether it'd be in Series Two or Three. It kept going backwards and forwards, but the basic idea started out in an underground, futuristic bunker with a kind of Dorian Gray character, and progressed from there, to an everyday setting.

"At this dinner," he continues, "Russell asked if I had kids and I told him about my seven-year-old boy, Sam. He said my aim should be to write a story that I knew Sam would love, but that I also loved writing. So we agreed on the idea of pictures being scary. Eyes following you around a room, that kind of thing. Possession, too."

Fear Her includes a couple of sly winks to horror fans: echoes of chillers like *The Exorcist* and *The Shining*. "There's also a bit of *Chariots of Fire*, which is scary for completely different reasons!" Matthew chuckles. "But the horror references were deliberate, because the kids watching won't have seen those movies.

"I hope *Fear Her* feels *scary*," he adds. "The things that have stuck in my mind from Series One, and what I've seen so far of Series Two, have been stuff that's deliberately tried to tap into childhood fears. I have memories of painted eyes in our house that used to freak me out. The other big fear is the thing in the wardrobe – always scary!"

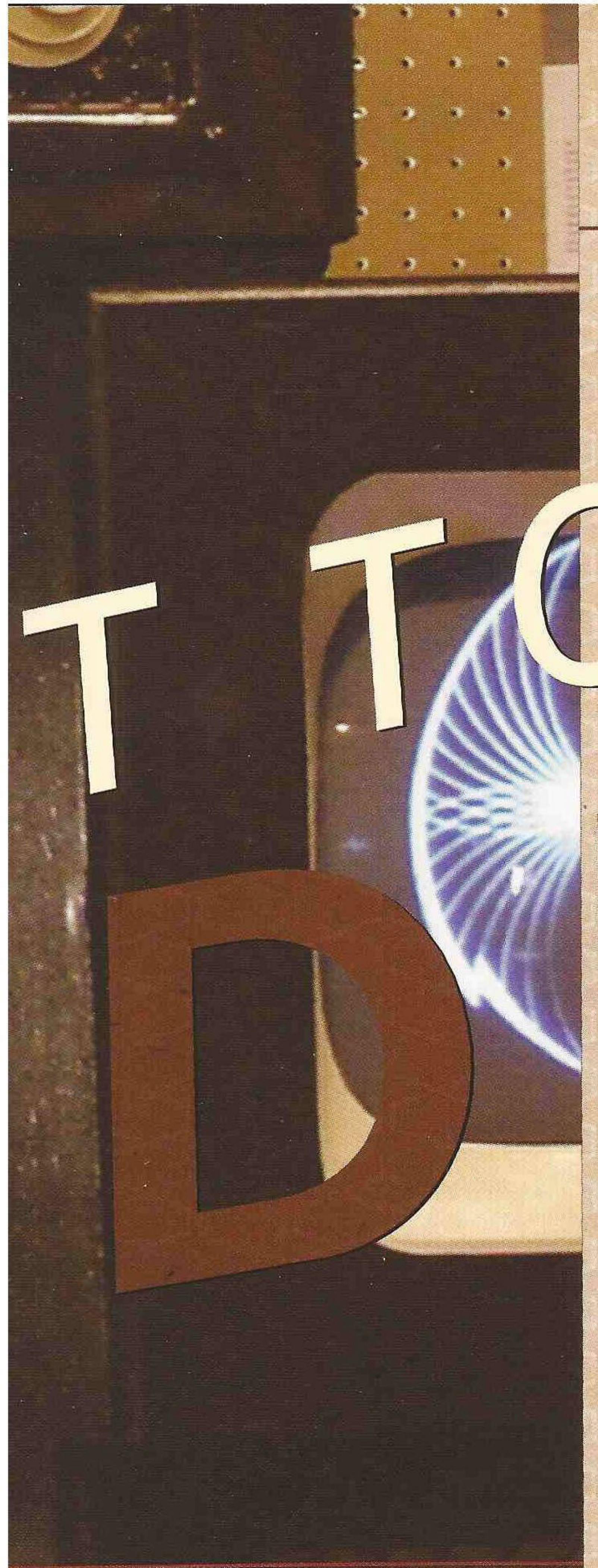
As Matthew remembers it, Russell came up with the idea of setting *Fear Her* around the London Olympics. "We didn't want to set it too far in the future. So I just ran with that Olympics idea and decided to make it intrinsic to the story. When I went back to Russell and told him how I wanted to do it, he said, 'Yes, go with that, absolutely'."

The writer admits that any drama involving child actors is always "a source of anxiety" – especially before the roles have been cast. "I've seen a rough cut of the episode and Abisola Agbaje has done a fine job as Chloe," he enthuses. "Right from the start, the script had a lot of Chloe in it. We were concerned because kids don't always work out well. Then they found Abi and were confident that we could have as much Chloe as we needed!"

Fear Her certainly has a few surprises in store. You can't always judge a book – or in this case a sketchpad – by its cover. "I feel it's a very emotional episode," says Matthew. "I've tried to tell a simple story, but withhold information. It's certainly been very well made. People may have a tear in their eye at the denouement..."

JASON ARNOPP

BLACK SCREEN T/V



DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!

Hello children everywhere. Our correspondent, young, fresh-faced, clean-living JASON ARNOPP, has filed a special report for you all – aren't you lucky? He's taken a special sneaky-peeky look at how a whole episode of your favourite thrilling televison serial – Doctor Who and the Idiot's Lantern – was written, performed, designed, filmed, edited, and finally brought into your sitting rooms via the miracle of the cathode ray tube. Won't that be thrilling? Do pay attention, kiddiewinks. There may be questions later...

THE 1950s LOOK

THE SCRIPT

Mark Gatiss (writer): "I wanted the Doctor and Rose to arrive in what they thought was 1956 New York, all dressed up with a dollop of style, only to find themselves in this drab 1953 environment. Rose was always in a pink dress. The only additions, as drafts went on, were the motorcycle helmets. Of course, I described Rose's 'big pink helmet' – I may also have put 'sorry!' in brackets afterwards...

"Being handed a 1950s story was a challenge. Russell said, 'I know this isn't you, but that's why I want you to do it'. I was a little frightened of the cool, hepcat language of films like *Absolute Beginners*. But when the Coronation idea solidified, I became more comfortable with that setting: jumpers, warm beer and orange squash!"

THE TONE MEETING

6 December 2005, in a room at BBC Wales. Like every tone meeting, it's all about sandwiches, biscuits and cake. Oh, and roughly 587 logistical questions which all need to be answered before anyone's allowed to leave.

"The preceding Cyberman episodes will have been very monochrome, full of black, brown and silver," stresses Russell T Davies. "So the Doctor and Rose can be unashamedly dressed for the time. Rose should look pink and gorgeous. The Doctor's suit looks rather 1950s, so he's coatless here."

"I'm thinking Technicolor," says director Euros Lyn. "*Singing in the Rain*. We'll find vibrant colour wherever we can."

Russell: "It's set in Muswell Hill. In Summer. And we're shooting in January. How do we feel about that? Are we laughing? Crying?"

He briefly considers adding a line to explain why all the trees have died. "Perhaps we should also explain why it looks like Cardiff in January. And why everyone's speaking Welsh."

THE SCREEN

Russell: "We like to keep varying the mix with the historicals – sometimes the Doctor and Rose dress up to fit the period, sometimes they don't, like in *Tooth and Claw*. But this was irresistible! Since the initial idea for this story was to do a rock 'n' roll story in the late 1950s, this is the last vestige of that notion! It's light and fun and sexy."

Euros: "At one point, David had such a duck's arse haircut that I was afraid we'd taken it too far! Both their haircuts were a nightmare, coc every time their helmets went on and off, the hair had to be reset."

Mark: "I got so used to David having huge hair that it was quite a shock to see him with normal hair in the other stories!"

Louise Page (costume designer): "Rose isn't a particularly 'pink' girl – Billie thinks of Rose as more of a tomboy. She pictured a mixture between prom queen and something more contemporary that Rose might have found in the TARDIS. It's more like a contemporary girl dressing up, *Sex and the City*-style, with a flavour of the 1950s. She didn't want to look too twee, like Olivia Newton John in *Grease*! I found these pink patent shoes in London, which I thought were fabulous and brought back to Cardiff for Billie to try on. She loved them, so that really governed everything else.

"As for David, even though the Doctor's suit isn't your average pinstripe, you could still accept him as being of this time. I also purposely gave him a slightly stiffer blue shirt for this episode."

THE VESPA

THE SCRIPT

Mark Gatiss: "One of the first ideas I had was the Doctor roaring out of the TARDIS on a Vespa, because I love the idea of the TARDIS being infinite. Strangely, the episode went out ten years to the day that the last vehicle drove *into* the TARDIS. This wasn't on my mind while writing, but it's the tenth anniversary of the TV Movie.

"There was once a very elaborate Vespa chase, through the London Underground. Back in that draft, the Connollys' street was Powell Street, which would become the Powell Estate. Which was a nice idea, but it was in South London, so it became a bit of a stretch for the Doctor and Rose to head up to Alexandra Palace!"

THE TONE MEETING

"Editorial policy allows us *not* to use helmets," announces Russell, "as long as we put a line in about it. But I was thinking about this last night and they could look stylish and funny, zipping along. Hooray! Cute helmets."

Production designer Edward Thomas cautions that the Vespa won't fit out through the doors.

"You sure?" frowns producer Phil Collinson. "Have you tried?"

"We could just paint the TARDIS around him," offers The Mill's Dave Houghton.

Then people start talking about ramps. The on-screen result will be a combination of both approaches...

THE SCREEN

Euros: "We had a stuntman riding through the prop TARDIS with the aid of a ramp. He did a little bunny-hop off the 'lip' of the TARDIS, then we CG-ed the TARDIS interior."

Dave: "There were three elements: the 'rectangle' of the TARDIS' interior with open doors, the location with the TARDIS in it and the Vespa riding through where the TARDIS door was on the previous shot! It sounds complicated, but it was fairly straightforward. Because the moped was moving quite fast, it probably only appeared for four frames."

Russell: "The Doctor and Rose on the Vespa is just the perfect image! Were we thinking of publicity photos? Oh yes we were! Though even the simplest thing on *Doctor Who* causes complications, cos then David had to go and have Vespa lessons – and even fell off at one point! – and we had to hire two stunt doubles for some of the driving. Everything costs!"

Euros: "The bike is a real 1956 Vespa and fiendishly difficult to ride. Even our stunt-rider who'd done *The Bourne Identity* was stalling it, so David had no chance. Whenever you see them riding in wide-shot, it's their stunt doubles. We did one dialogue scene where they were strapped into something resembling an over-sized baby-walker which surrounded the moped like an island."

Louise: "The script never mentioned anything about Rose having shades. But Billie said, 'David and I reckon it'd be so cool if I wore some as well!' She originally asked if I could find pink heart-shaped frames. I couldn't!"

THE FACELESS ONES

THE SCRIPT

Mark: "After *The Unquiet Dead*, I was very aware that Faceless Gran was another scary old lady, but it just came from the 1950s family thing. I made Grandma a Granddad for one draft, but it's just not the same. Originally, Grandma had a lot more living room banter, about how she saw the last Coronation: 'Oooh, we all wore hats and there was a little German band!' All that dialogue went, but Grandma is played by Margaret John from [1967 *Doctor Who* serial] *Fury from the Deep*, so all is not lost!

"A few drafts in, we decided to up the stakes and have Rose actually lose her face – which is more horrifying than her just being captured. It's nicely traditional that she screams, too, reverting to companion type! One omitted scene had a faceless Rose wandering around in the street, but it's better for her to just turn up in police custody as a surprise."

THE TONE MEETING

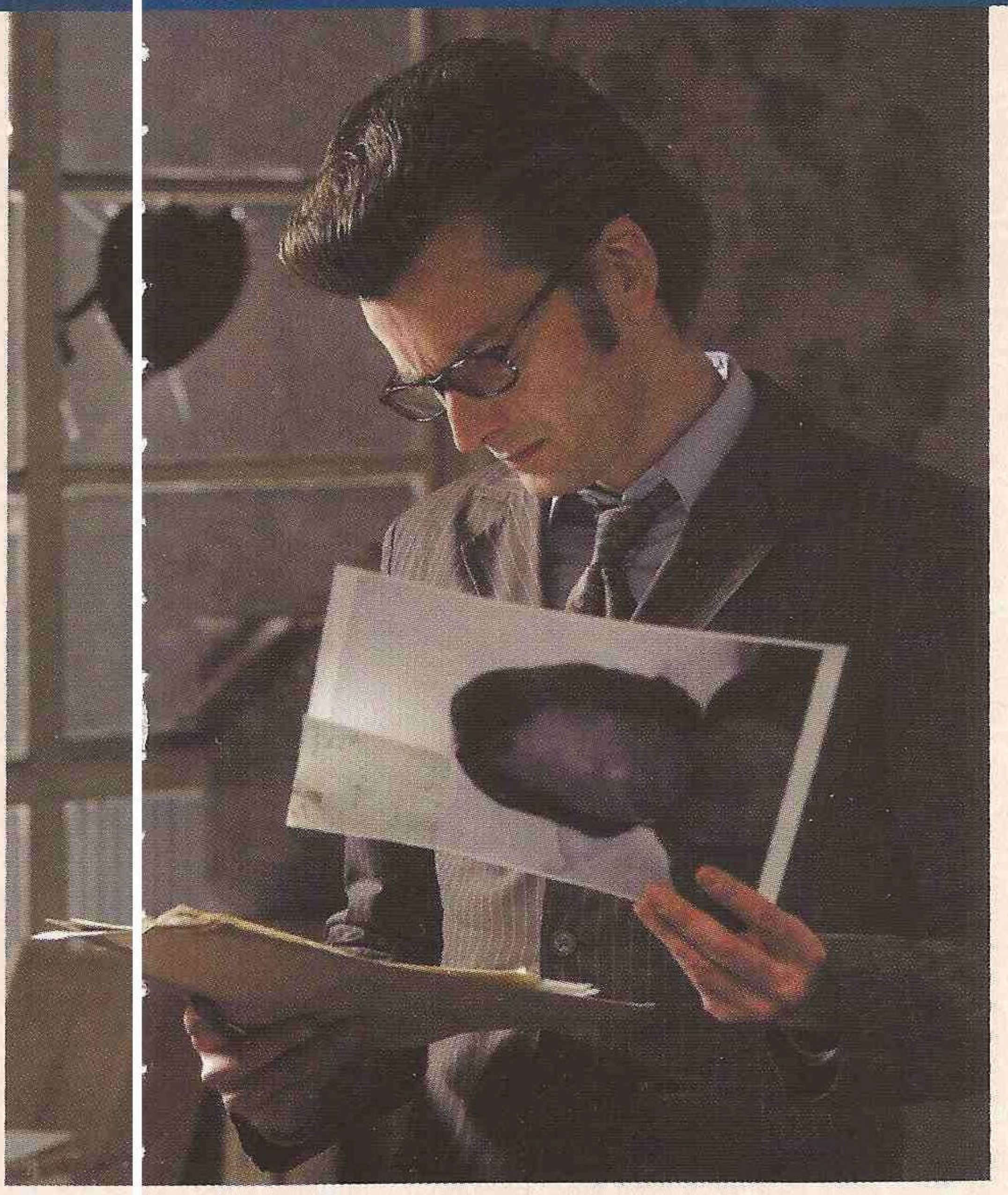
Edward Thomas produces a mood board covered with pictures of sinister masks. "Ed brought this from his house," Russell explains, helpfully.

So just how faceless are these faceless folk, anyway?

"Faceless Grandma will still have ears, won't she?" muses Russell. "She'll have to have saggy old lady's ears." He laughs volcanically, triggering everyone else. Biscuit crumbs hurtle through the air.

There's uncertainty as to whether the blank faces will be prosthetics or CGI.

"Can we have a huge close-up, where the Doctor reaches over and touches her blank face?" asks Russell. "It could be a stunning moment."



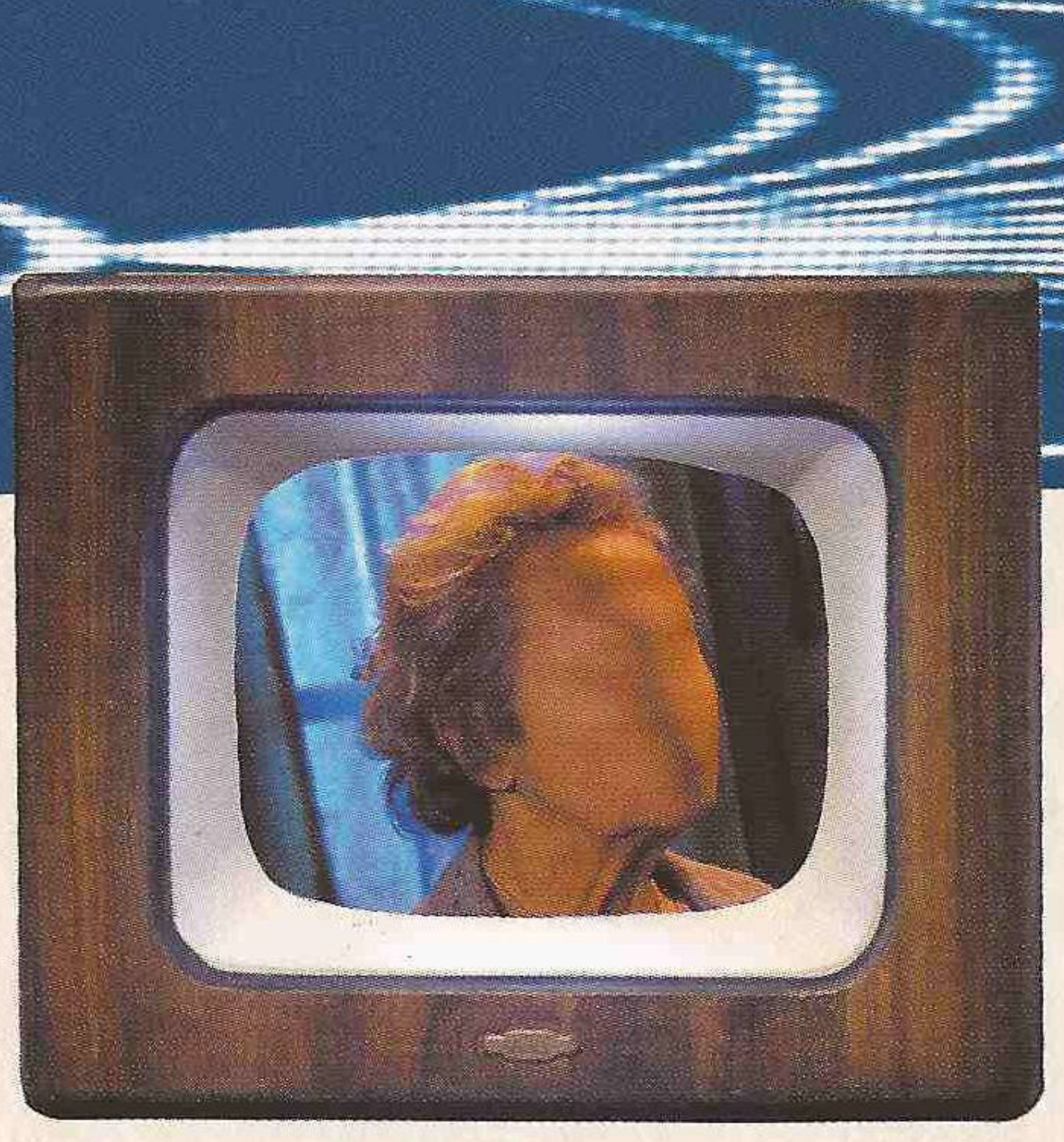
"Better to do it as a prosthetic if you want something touched," advises Dave.

Russell ultimately suggests that the faces, "need eye-socketing and shape to them. Otherwise they're more like an Auton. Actually, give them a mouth. It'll solve the practical problems of people being able to breathe and it'll look good. Is that good? Shall I go now?"

THE SCREEN

FACELESS GRAN

Dave: "Our man Chris Petts built 3D models of the actors' faces, then textured it with skin tones and subtleties. After being lit to fit the shot, it was composited on top of the people's faces. Ink crosses were drawn on their faces to help with movement-tracking on the computer."



Mark: "Faceless Grandma is very frightening, although it's hard to shake the image of Margaret John with those little crosses on her face. While on the set for this scene, I half expected the Doctor to turn around and say, 'Who's been at this poor old lady with a marker pen?!' I especially liked the face still having wrinkles: horrible!"

FACELESS ROSE

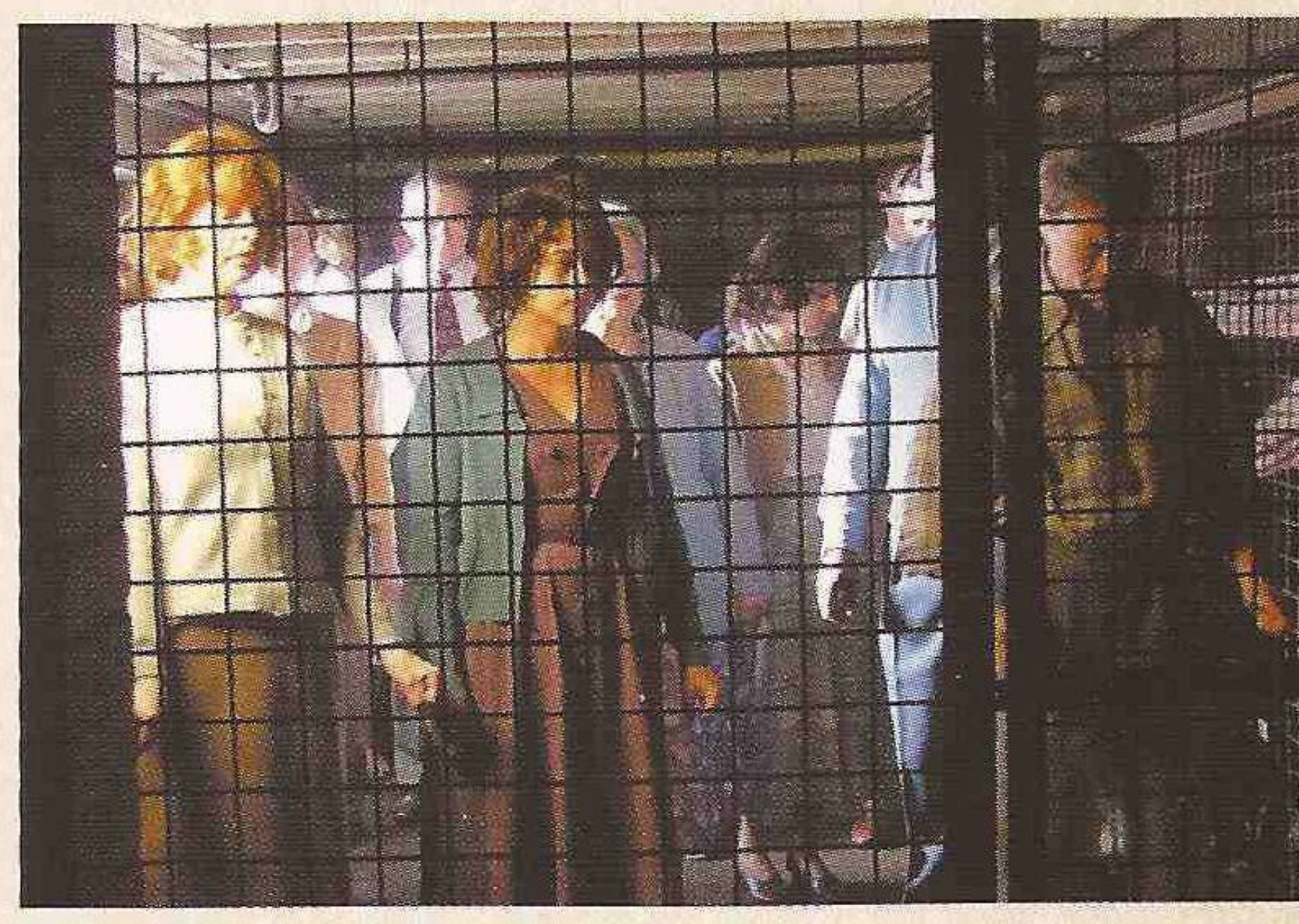
Euros: "It really was Billie Piper standing there, mainly because it's such an emotive scene for the Doctor. But she had crosses all over her face, so she and David just wet themselves! At the beginning of that scene, she had a blanket over her head as well, and when that came off her hair kept standing up at a funny angle. I think that was the scene with the most corpsing. Seven takes."

Russell: "In a tone meeting, we talk through every possibility. I did wonder for some time about the blank people having mouths – it just would've been so scary, having mute, gaping holes in those empty faces. But it would've meant a huge amount of prosthetics – every single extra would have to have been fitted with an individual mask. It was too expensive and time-consuming."

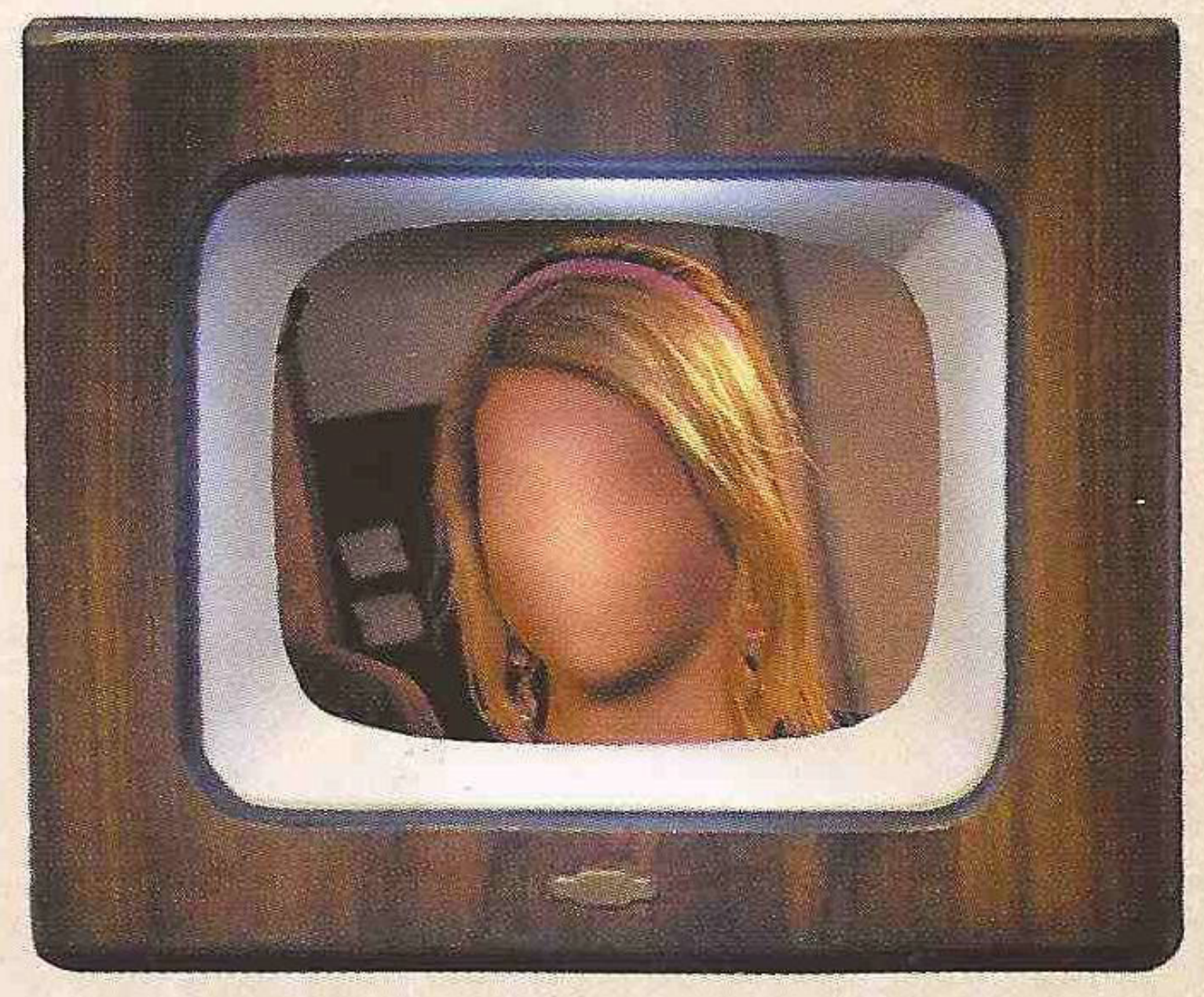
FACELESS PEOPLE IN CAGE

Euros: "While Rose and Grandma are CG effects, these people are all prosthetic. The problem with prosthetics is that you're using human beings and can't shave their noses off. So we tried to cast people with small noses..."

Neill Gorton (Millennium FX): "Weirdly, the blank faces were an utter headache – harder to do than Cat People! We used some very patient extras and careful scheduling. When you glue something over someone's face, so they can't breathe or see, you have to minimise their discomfort and the time-frame. We created a simple prosthetic that would tack on very quickly, with tiny pinholes where the eyes are. The vision was virtually nothing. They also had a tiny little gap under the chin, to breathe through. I told Phil Collinson, 'As long as they're not looking up at the sky or doing a tap dance routine, we'll be all right!'"



Mark: "This is the scariest scene, for me. One tiny *Quatermass* reference survived – possibly because no-one noticed it – in the shape of the faceless people's hands clenching and unclenching."



THE WIRE

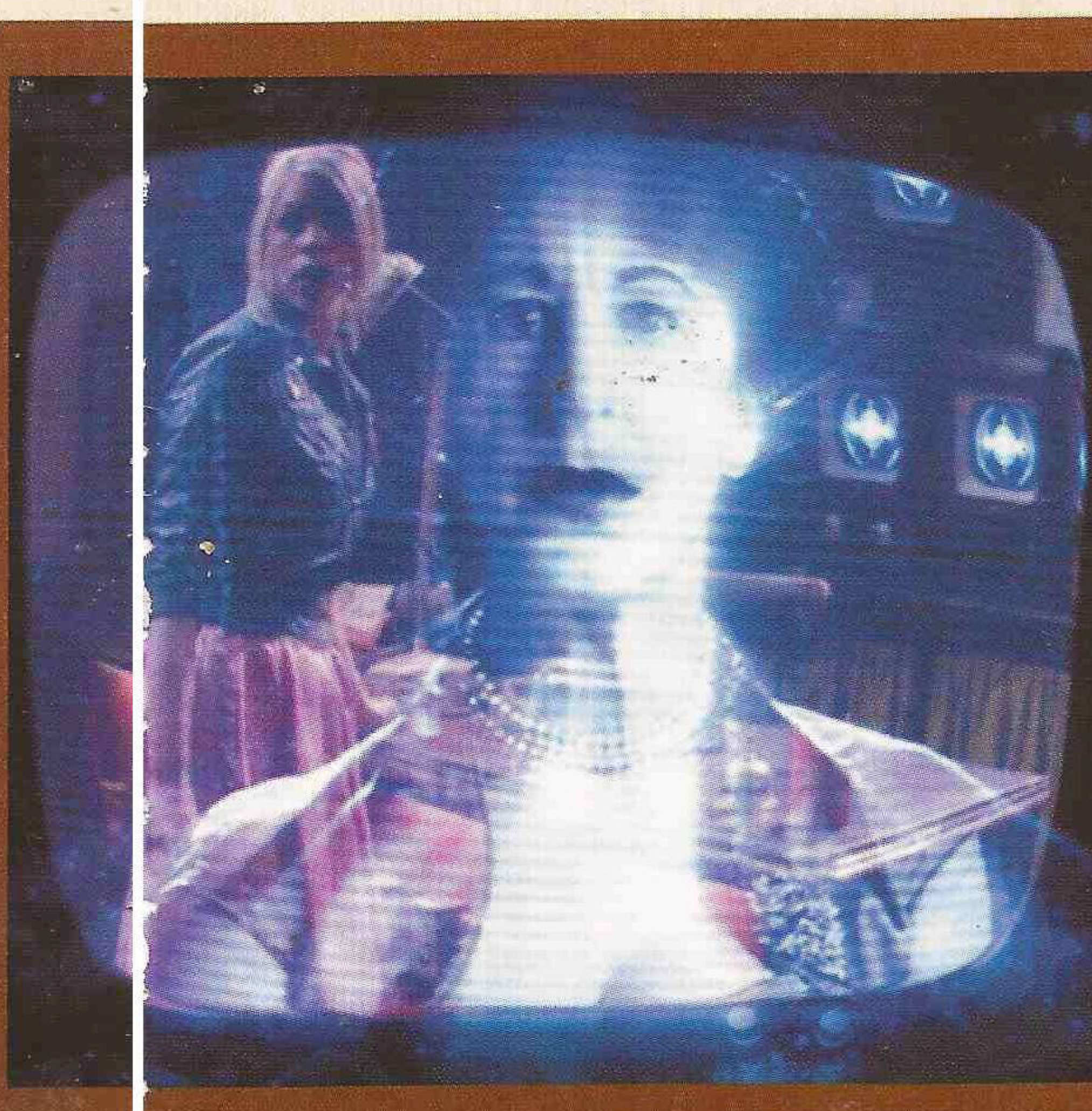
THE SCRIPT

Mark: "I envisioned The Wire exactly as she is on screen! I have a really old recording of *The Quatermass Experiment* and at the end there's continuity announcer Sylvia Peters saying [adopts clipped tones], 'You can see Part Two next Saturday at a quarter-to-eight!'

"Magpie was originally more of a powerful villain. But when the idea came to somehow personify The Wire, it was a lovely rush of ideas. Of course, once you have her as an announcer, you have an in-built bank of wonderful lines like, 'Good night children everywhere'!"

THE TONE MEETING

The Wire is not specifically discussed this afternoon. Because it's only a matter of casting, there are more pressing issues to chew fat over – including Russell's spontaneous idea for a new sitcom called *Perish the Thought*. It's not clear from **DWM**'s meticulous notes how this enters the conversational flow...



THE SCREEN

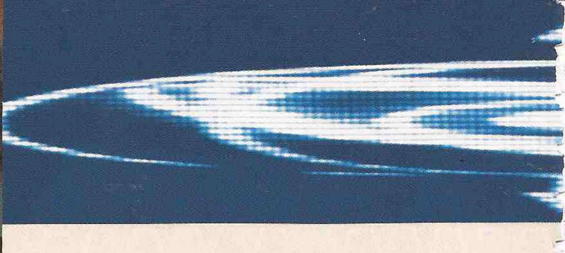
Mark: "The Wire's scenes were actually filmed in Alexandra Palace. It was probably the only thing to be 'broadcast' from there in about 50 years! We were there anyway, because we needed plate-shots of the building for the climax. Some people just know how to do *Doctor Who* villains and Maureen is perfect. Some of her takes were quite orgasmic!"

Russell: "I'm proud to say that I suggested Maureen Lipman, cos I've always wanted to work with her. Mind you, I never got to meet her: we just had one phone call discussing exactly how posh The Wire needs to be. But she's just what you want in this sort of part. Fun but not send-up, and dark as hell when it needs to be."

Louise: "You only see Maureen's head and shoulders, but she was dressed from head to toe! We knew there was a possibility you wouldn't see below her head, but Euros sent me a picture of a newsreader from that period. I went round to Maureen's house one afternoon and dressed her in everything from watch to shoes to tights..."

Euros: "The Wire's scenes were the very first we shot. We got an actor in to read all the other lines, to give her something to react to and for timing purposes. Even though David Tennant's delivery is very different, of course, we had to make everything fit Maureen."

MAGPIE electricals
Televisions
Radios
MAGPIE electricals
MAGPIE electricals
CLOSED
Gramophones
MAGPIE electricals



MR. MAGPIE'S SHOP

THE SCRIPT

Mark: "The pleading faces on TV were Russell's idea, over dinner. We initially imagined it as a huge warehouse bank of TVs – like *The Pyramid Game*! – which we couldn't afford. Rationally, you don't really know why The Wire has stored these people's faces like this, but it just looks great.

"Magpie's shop initially had two parts. There was the front counter, then through a beaded curtain you had The Wire in the back. This was good for the scene with Magpie and Rose, because it was more like he was desperately trying to save her from the spider hidden away in her lair. The TVs originally blew up when The Wire vanishes, too..."

THE TONE MEETING

Russell offers that Magpie himself, "should be a bit of a failure. Slightly seedy."

Euros wonders how to practically handle the TV playback.

"It takes two hours for the old sets to come on," points out Russell. "So Magpie will say, 'Ha ha! My evil plan! Warming up...'"

Should be the TVs be on or off? The idea emerges of an on-screen test card.

"Why did they *have* a test card?" asks Phil. "What was the point?"

Russell shrugs. "Testing."

"We'll stick a bit of card in the front of the tellies," smiles Phil, "Ooh, you lot: you know how to complicate things!"

The next chin-scratcher: how to blow up the TVs, as the script currently demands. CGI or real explosives? A debate ensues.

Phil: "We couldn't just blow the shop up, could we?"

Russell: "Hmmm... it's not quite the same effect."

"Still does it for me," Phil beams. "I love an explosion!"

THE SCREEN

Russell: "We pulled out of the explosions in the second tone meeting. Hand on heart, I always felt that the story ended when The Wire disappears. You didn't honestly need the explosions.

"We camera-tested the pleading faces on a few production team members – Tim Hodges and Lynsey Muir looked gorgeous! But I hate in-joke appearances. I actually think they're unprofessional: they're doing an extra out of work."

Louise: "Russell said that Magpie's costume shouldn't be comical in any way. To me, Magpie's name suggested something black and

THE STREET PARTY

THE SCRIPT

Mark: "The street party was originally set at night, with fireworks. Matthew Graham also had fireworks at the end of his *Fear Her* script, however. So we turned the finale into a big summer street party – even though it was raining! I'm always fond of those *Doctor Who* stories where it looks like they stay at the end and have a good time: celebrate a job well done!"

THE TONE MEETING

"Street parties are in daytime, aren't they?" hoots Russell. "We're mad! Let's lose the fireworks and keep it in daytime."

"Can we still have sparklers?" wonders Edward.

One last decision to make: how many people at this party?

"Hundreds," cackles Russell. "You'll have the Sycorax in there, a few Daleks, a boy with a hoop..."

THE SCREEN

Russell: "How could we not have this party? It's such a central Coronation image. If you look carefully, some of those extras are bopping about in a slightly too modern way, cos we played in some rock 'n' roll for them to move to – only to realise later that the music wasn't written yet! And besides, a good old fashioned piano just suits the mood better. So there's one woman in the background who's inventing the jive too early!"

Mark: "The only way to have a convincing street party is to almost do the real thing. Get out the trestle tables, hang the bunting, then hand out the orange squash and corned beef sandwiches!"

Dave: "We shot three elements, then pasted them together. It was the same guests, repeated three times. It works as long as you mix extras up and don't multiply them too many times.

white, so we agreed that he should be in that kind of suit. Through script drafts, Magpie went from being rich – and therefore smarter-looking – to being much more normal. So we made him shabbier. I gave him a bow-tie, which is a bit quirkier."

Mark: "I especially love the shop's exterior, with the ebonised black logo and van. I also love that hardboard stuff with holes drilled into it, that shop owners hung things on. It really looks like a backstreet electrical store.

Euros: "We had all the TV casings made, modelled on real old tellies. Portable TVs inside were linked to a bank of DVD players. Each face was looped on one DVD disc. The people were all supporting artists that we cast, knowing they'd be able to do the emotional acting required."

Mark: "Having reading a few previews in the listings magazines, I'm at pains to point out that this isn't an anti-TV story. I obviously love TV and was keen for the Doctor to say how much he loves it. But I do think that today's kids are too fat. They should watch *Doctor Who*, then go outside and play!"

There are only so many colours people can wear!"

Euros: "The music we played on the set was actually Lonnie Donegan, which would never have been played at a Coronation street party – it would have been too cutting edge! Murray Gold has done a brilliant job with that honky-tonk riff which actually matches their dance movements..."

Louise: "I avoided any kind of green clothing in this scene, because I knew there was the possibility of using CGI for the crowd. I almost always avoid green costumes in *Doctor Who*, in fact! The only time I did, was in *The Girl in the Fireplace*, when Madame De Pompadour and her friend walk through the gardens. I knew there was no green screen involved, so I thought, 'That's it – I'm using green!'"

Euros: "My first assistant director Peter Bennett and his team choreographed the action really well – it was lively and flowed. I said it should be like the end of an *Asterix* book: all's well with the world and everybody's happy!"

THE CONNELLEY'S FRONT ROOM

THE SCRIPT

Mark: "There was originally at least one other house interior seen on the Connollys' street, because I wanted to get across that The Wire was affecting everyone.

"I never really knew how the face-sucking would be depicted. I was more concerned with explaining how and why The Wire was sucking face. The Doctor's line comparing it to 'an over-fed pig' was key there."

THE TONE MEETING

"These people should be in a state of mid-face-stretch," says Russell of the Connolly clan. "If they collapse, it's over. Oh, just imagine: dozens of people, collapsed in front of their TV. Kids, even the dog. My dog's got no nose! It could be the funniest thing in the world."

He adds that the team has been permitted to use actual Coronation footage – apart from the crown actually going down on the Queen's head.

"That moment is sacrosanct, apparently," he frowns. "We live in a weird country."

THE SCREEN

Russell: "I suspect the real front room would've been infinitely brown, and given the amount of time we spend in there, that would've been very dull. Euros and the design team had the idea of bleeding Union Flag (not Union Jack, as Rose points out!) colours throughout the whole thing. But it's not too bright, cos it's a very oppressive household, so I think we got the balance just right in the end."

Mark: "It's a bit like the séance in *The Unquiet Dead*, which would have been darker in real life. You want to make this classic 1950s living room look a bit drab, but not *so* drab that people want to turn over. It was fairly drab, though. When we were there, it felt like it should smell of wee a little bit."

Euros: "We used real 1950s wallpaper, and thank God we had *just* enough of it to cover the walls. I'm not sure if Rita Connolly would've chosen that design, but maybe Eddie bullied her into it.

"The trickiest part was the dog. We put the dog trainer just above the television and he kept leaning into shot, so we had to get him to step back. It was a very well-trained Jack Russell, though. He was our second choice: our first was too similar in fluffiness and shade to Auntie Betty's coat, so you wouldn't have seen him at all!

"The face-sucking effect was probably our biggest compromise, compared to what we all imagined. The only way to get the melting face look, like the Nazi in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, was to hand-animate every single frame. With 12 family members, we could never have done it."

Mark: "I rather like the electronic effect, because The Wire is an electronic alien, as it were! So it makes sense to do the face-sucking like this, rather than a more gooey, fleshy David Cronenberg thing."

TRANSMITTER BATTLE

THE SCRIPT

Mark: "I used to live in Muswell Hill and always loved the whole area. The final battle became a King Kong homage – Alexandra Palace being our version of the Empire State Building!

"Magpie was originally electrocuted and fell, but it might have been a bit much to have this Sunday roast falling through the air! There was a line which survived for a long time as the Doctor and Tommy arrived on the Vespa. The Doctor hesitates when he sees the tower, Tommy asks what's wrong and the Doctor mutters, 'Nothing. I've just got a thing about transmitters. I fell off one once!' *Logopolis* humour! It didn't make it, sadly. Wasn't even shot!

"There was no end of debate about how the Doctor should defeat The Wire. I actually asked a physicist if there was a way of turning the transmitter into a receiver. He sent me an e-mail which was virtually talking about the polarity of the neutron flow. It would basically have involved the Doctor freezing the TV mast!

"There was also a closing scene in which you saw The Wire screaming, then some static, then some *Corrie* with which the Doctor had taped over her!"

THE TONE MEETING

Russell wants to see, "Magpie and the Doctor actually climbing the metal. We've had enough ladders in Episodes 5 and 6."

Edward suggests using "a tube at the docks," a hangar or a pylon. But can pylons be safely turned off?

"Hopefully," says Phil. "Maybe David could do the turning-off ceremony."

Ever-conscientious Julie injects a note of caution: "Make sure the pylon looks old. We don't want kids climbing up pylons on the Monday morning after it goes out..."

THE SCREEN

Russell: "We use a Cardiff helipad for a lot of these shoots, cos it's flat and distant from the city, so there's no buidings looming over you – you can pretend you're high up. The roof of the Cyberfactory was done here too. So they built half a transmitter mast on the ground, green-screened the floor, and the Mill modelled the rest of the mast! It's very hard to shoot up-and-down action, cos every shot costs so much, and I think Euros did this perfectly."

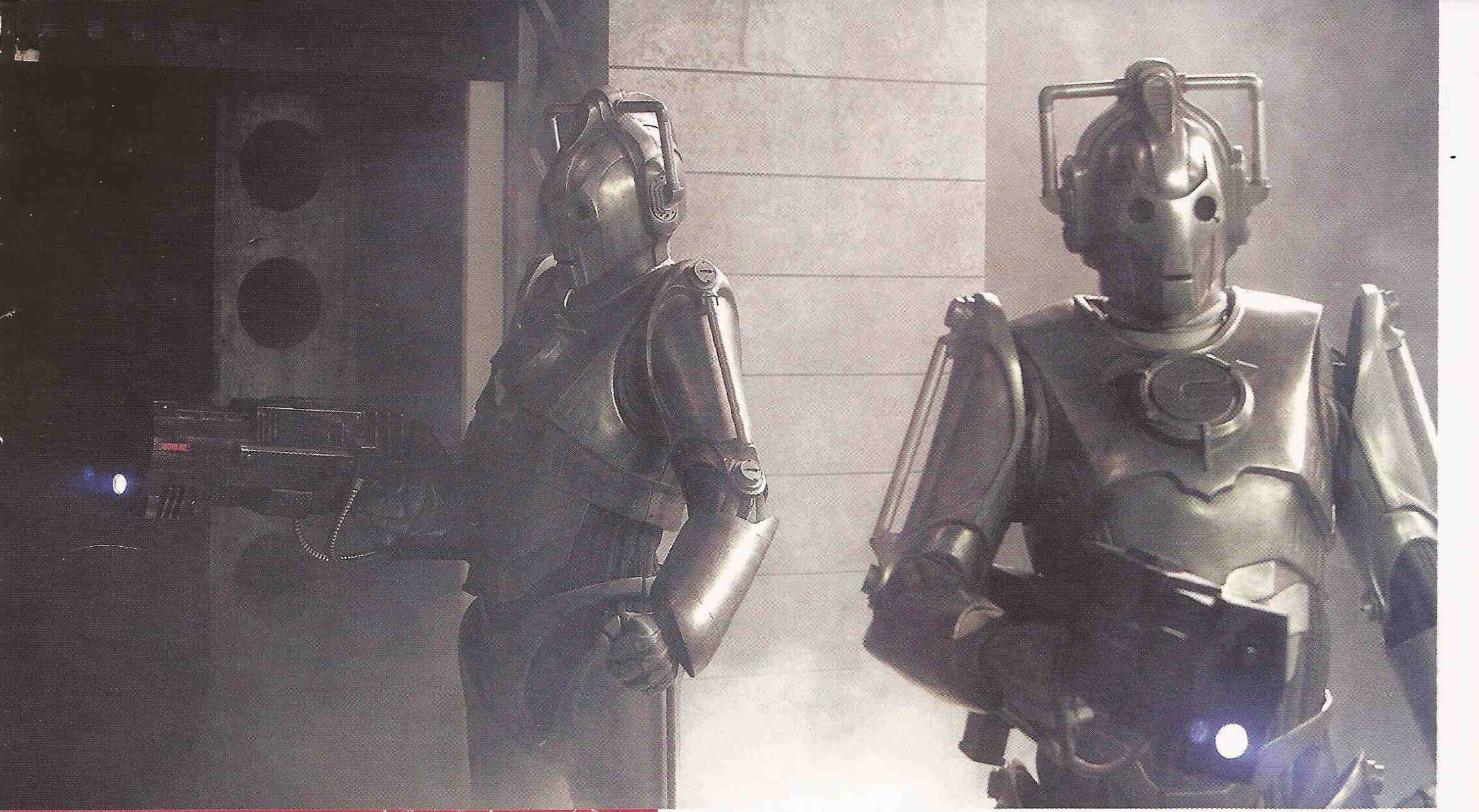
Dave: "The long shot is a matte painting. We completely built the transmitter as a 3D model, then our matte painters took that and painted it into a rough plate of Alexandra Palace. It's basically a still painting. Little elements like the Doctor and Magpie, which we'd filmed on the helipad, were then pasted onto that transmitter. It was a bit tricky, especially with all the red lightning that we had to do."

Louise: "I wanted the Doctor to have his coat on as he climbed up the mast, so that it would flap in the wind. Russell put that into the script, with the Doctor going into the TARDIS, then coming out with his coat on!"

Mark: "It looks fantastic. I love David's coat flapping in the gale. When they shot the Betamax video tape scene, the tape had a blank label, so I got them to write some things on there, then cross them out, suggesting that the Doctor had used it for recording *Triangle*, *Dynasty* and *The A-Team*!"

Euros: "We were initially going to shoot in a heliport which had big hangar doors, but when we turned up on the day they told us we couldn't film because a police helicopter was being serviced!

The actual set we had was only ten-feet high. Everything had to be tweaked and adjusted to fit, but I think it turned out well. It looks impossibly high: I buy it!"



TV PREVIEW

EPISODE 12 & 13:

ARMY OF GHOSTS DOOMSDAY

▲ *Top: The Cybermen are on the march once more...*

▲ *Above: The Doctor gets ready to see* ***Dimensions in Time****. Or not...*

▼ *Torchwood's Yvonne (Tracy-Ann Oberman).*

THIS SUMMER, THE COUNTRY IS united in front of its television sets, cheering on its heroes, as a band of strong, steely men – with familiar insignia on their chests – takes on the world. It's a battle that bestrides frontiers. It captures the imagination with cracking drama, thrills and scares, and inevitable heartache. They call it 'The Greatest Show on Earth'...

It is, of course, the FIFA World Cup. Or, alternatively, it's *Doctor Who*. (Do you see what we did there?) At the time of writing, England is yet to be knocked out of the football competition. It's 40 years since our boys last lifted the most coveted prize in sport, in the same year – 1966 – that the Doctor first thrashed the Cybermen, and if England is hoping to repeat the triumph, then so, we should imagine, is the Doctor.

Yes, the Cybermen are back! But the opposition is proper tough. "I dreaded all those *Who*-lore legends that the Cybermen were difficult to write," says Russell T Davies, who scripted these episodes, "but I had a great time. I loved writing them! You really have to put yourself into a logical, emotionless frame of mind. I probably wasn't much fun to be around for a few weeks. No change there, some would say. But the monsters and villains are such a vital part of *Doctor Who*. I don't know how you could not enjoy them. And it was nice to ramp them up in scale: they were 'new' creations in *Rise of the Cybermen*, but now they've got a lot more strength and technology."

The majority of this two-parter takes place inside the Torchwood Institute. But it's a game of two halves: *Army of Ghosts* is the lighter of the two episodes, with some clever comedy, such as Jackie's first trip in the TARDIS, and cameos from TV presenters Alistair Appleton, Trisha Goddard, and Derek Acorah, and *EastEnders* star Babs Windsor; in *Doomsday*, however, the temperature rises – worlds collide, it's a fight to the death, and, as the saying goes, things will never be the same again.

"Having ended Series One in the far future," says Russell, "I thought it was time to bring the threat right back down to modern-day Earth. The monster on your doorstep – there's nothing finer. It's time to pay off regular viewers by tying up elements that have been drip-fed throughout the run, and always to raise the stakes for the Doctor and Rose's survival – and Jackie, too – to the ultimate degree. I had all this mapped out well in advance – I suppose since before the end of filming last year, around about January, February – just as I've known for months how Series Three is going to end!"

Did you ever consider trying to keep the return of the Cybermen a surprise?

"We did wonder whether we should," nods Russell, "but last year really taught us that trying anything like that is simply a waste of time. But really the Cybermen were such a hit this year with younger viewers – the mailbags are full of kids' drawings and homemade costumes – that we thought it would be exciting for them to anticipate the next Cyber-invasion. I doubt there'll be many surprises by the time we reach the screen..."

But it'd be nice if Russell were proved wrong, because there are some proper 'oh my God' moments in these episodes, including the awesome cliffhanger to Episode 12 (the series' finest to date), and a devastating climax. England expects, and planet Earth watches...

BENJAMIN COOK

DOCTOR·WHO

BROADCAST
Saturday 1-8 July 2006, BBC One

WRITER
Russell T Davies

DIRECTOR
Graeme Harper

STARRING
David Tennant, Billie Piper, Camille Coduri, Tracy-Ann Oberman, Raji James, Freema Agyeman, Oliver Mellor, Hadley Fraser, Nicholas Briggs, Derek Acorah, Barbara Windsor, Trisha Goddard

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QUOTE, UNQUOTE
THE DOCTOR: *It's not an invasion. It's too late for that. It's a victory.*

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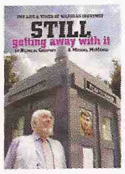

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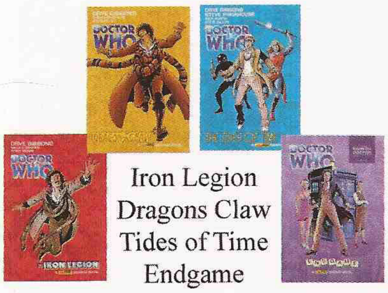

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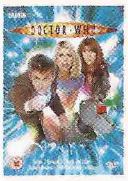

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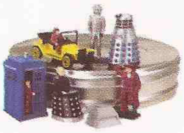

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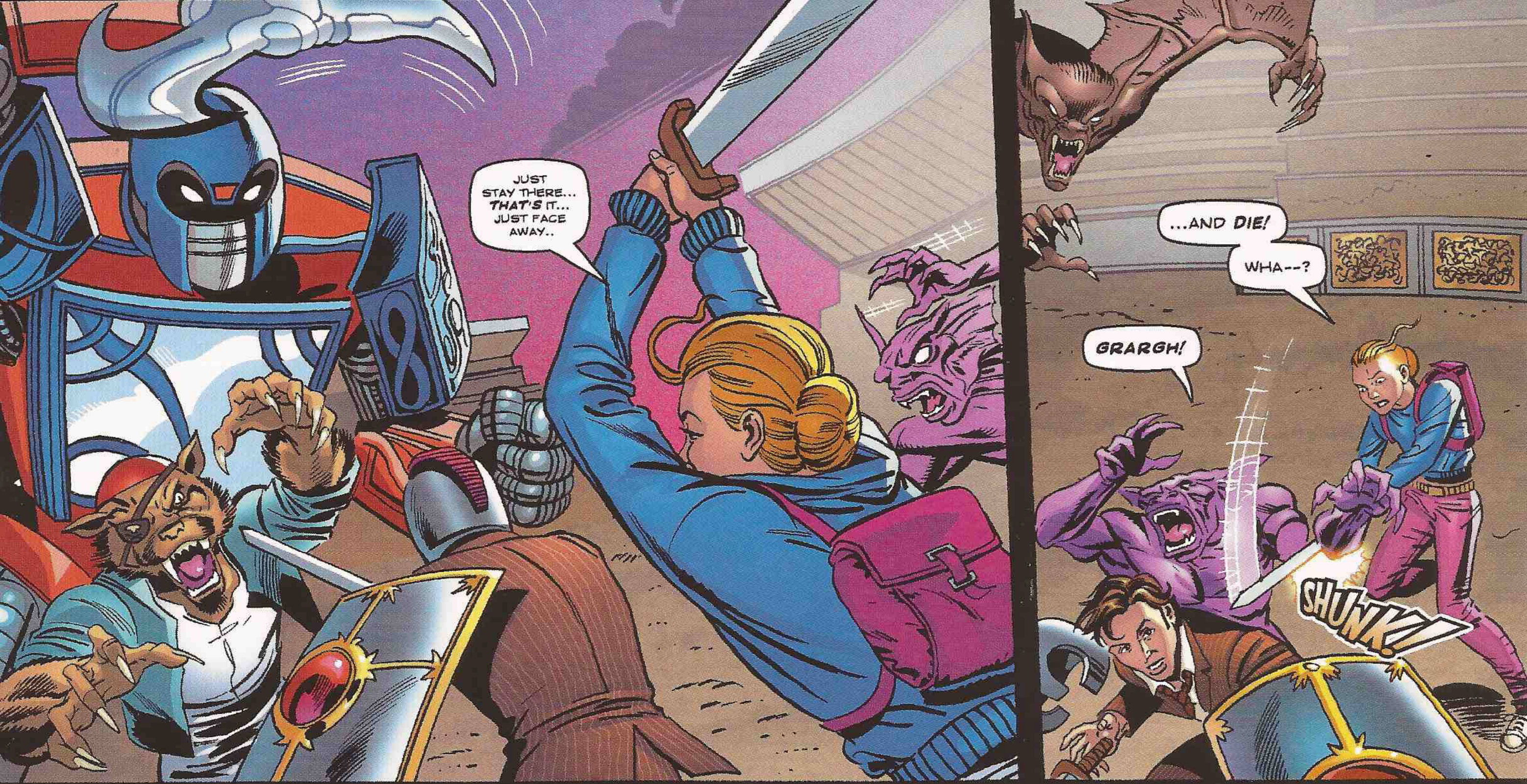
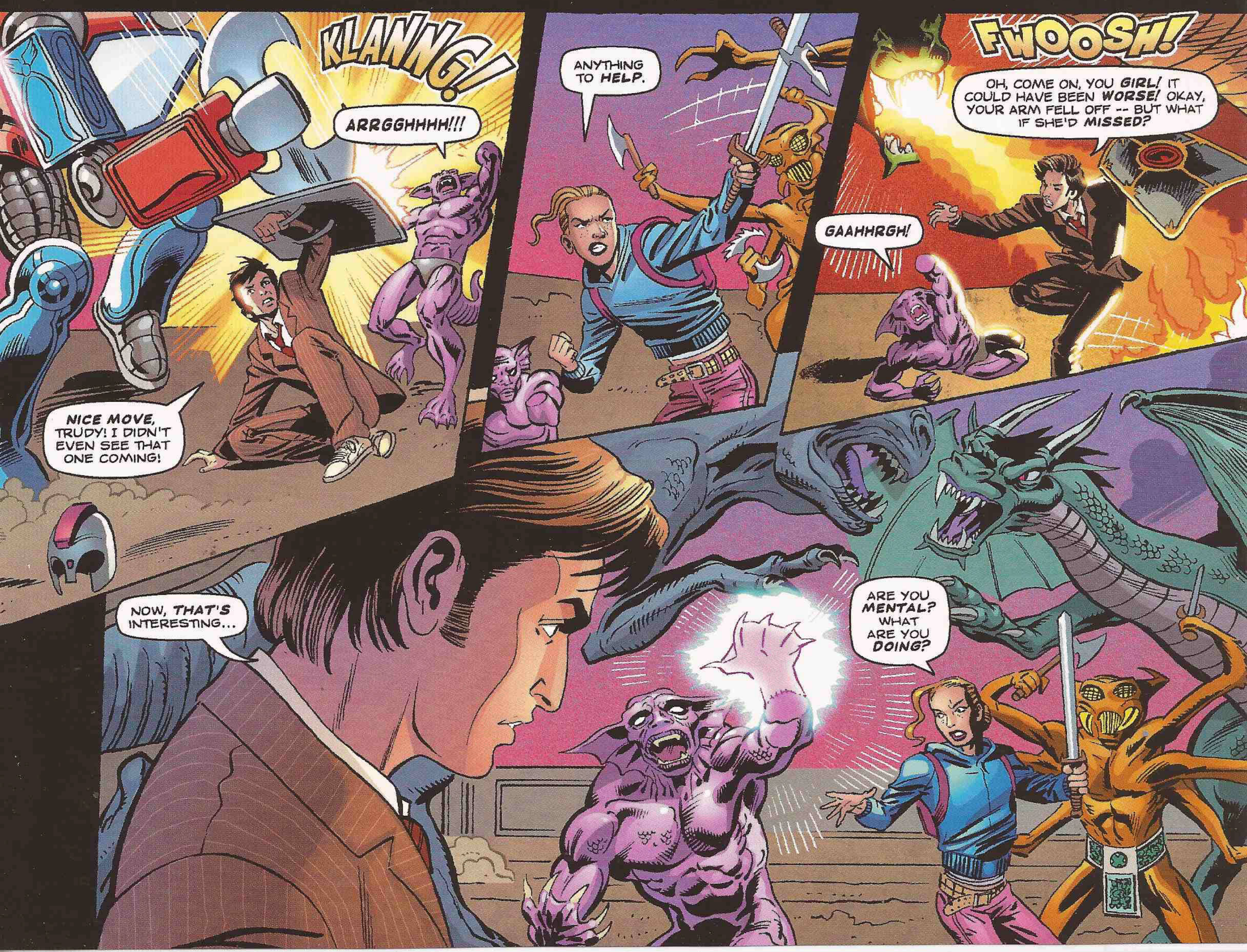
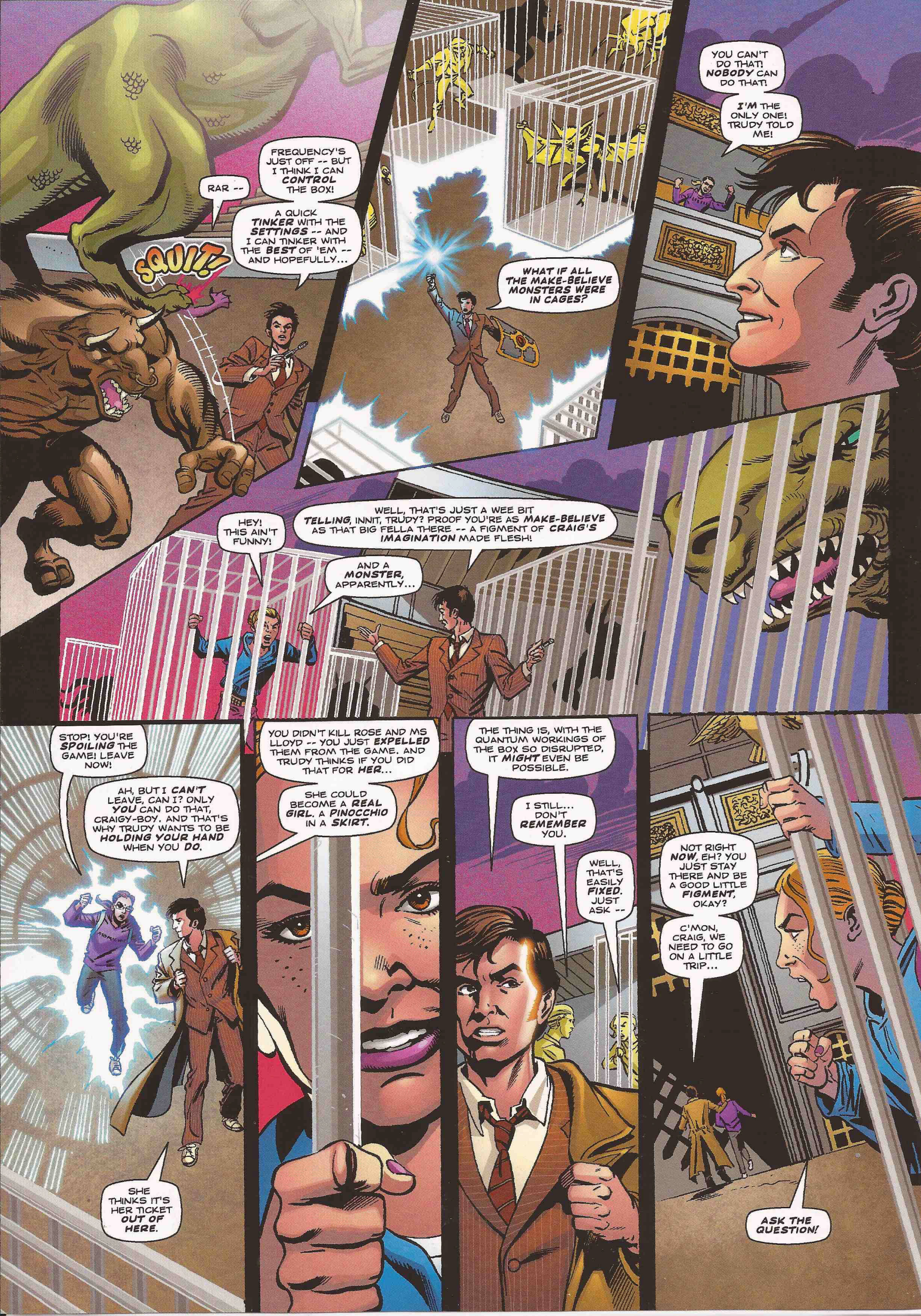
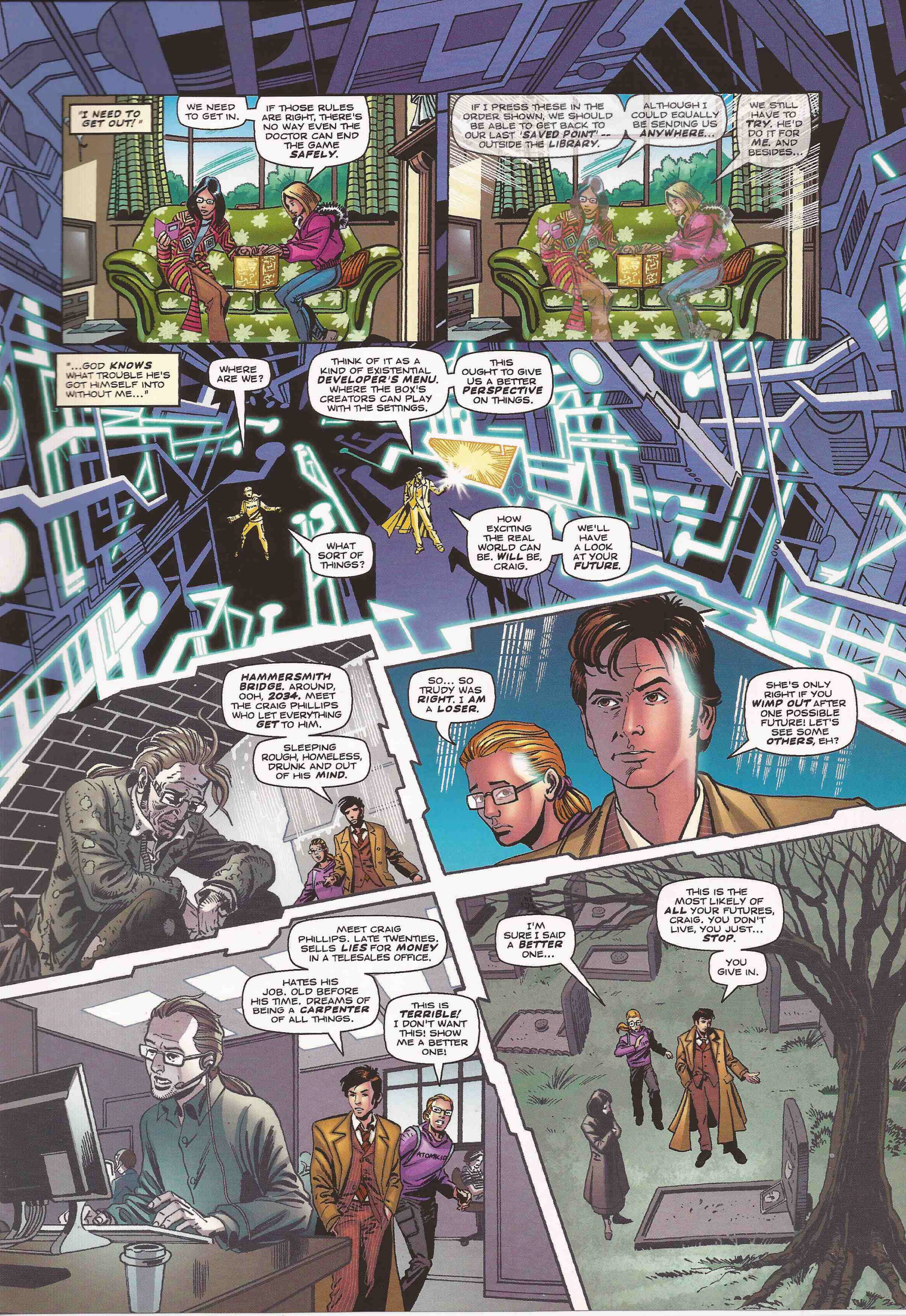

JUST STAY THERE... THAT'S IT... JUST FACE AWAY..
...AND DIE!
WHA--?
GRARGH!
SHUNK!

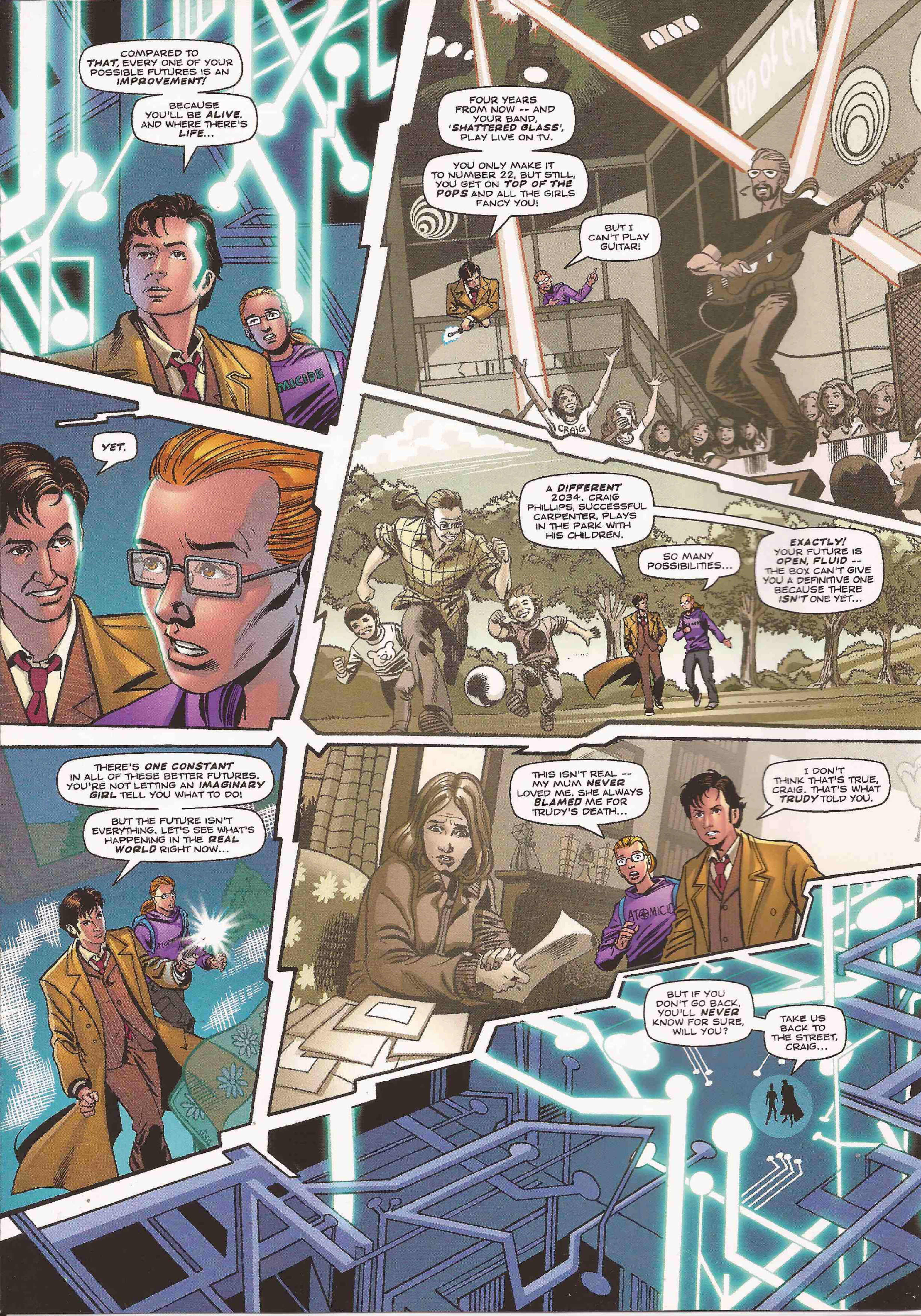
F.A.Q. PART THREE

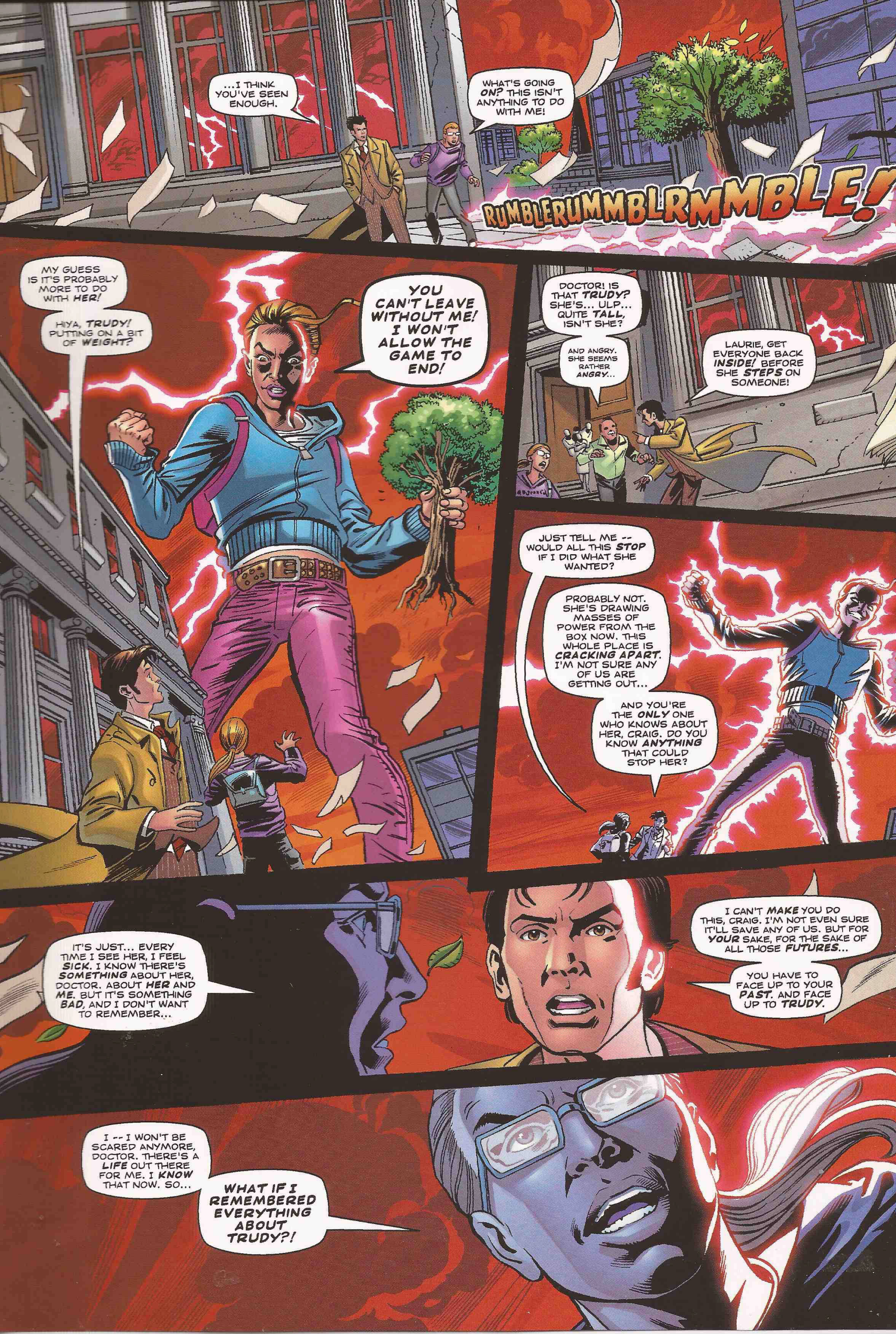
STORY TONY LEE PENCIL ART MIKE COLLINS INKS DAVID A ROACH COLOURS JAMES OFFREDI
LETTERS ROGER LANGRIDGE EDITORS CLAYTON HICKMAN & SCOTT GRAY

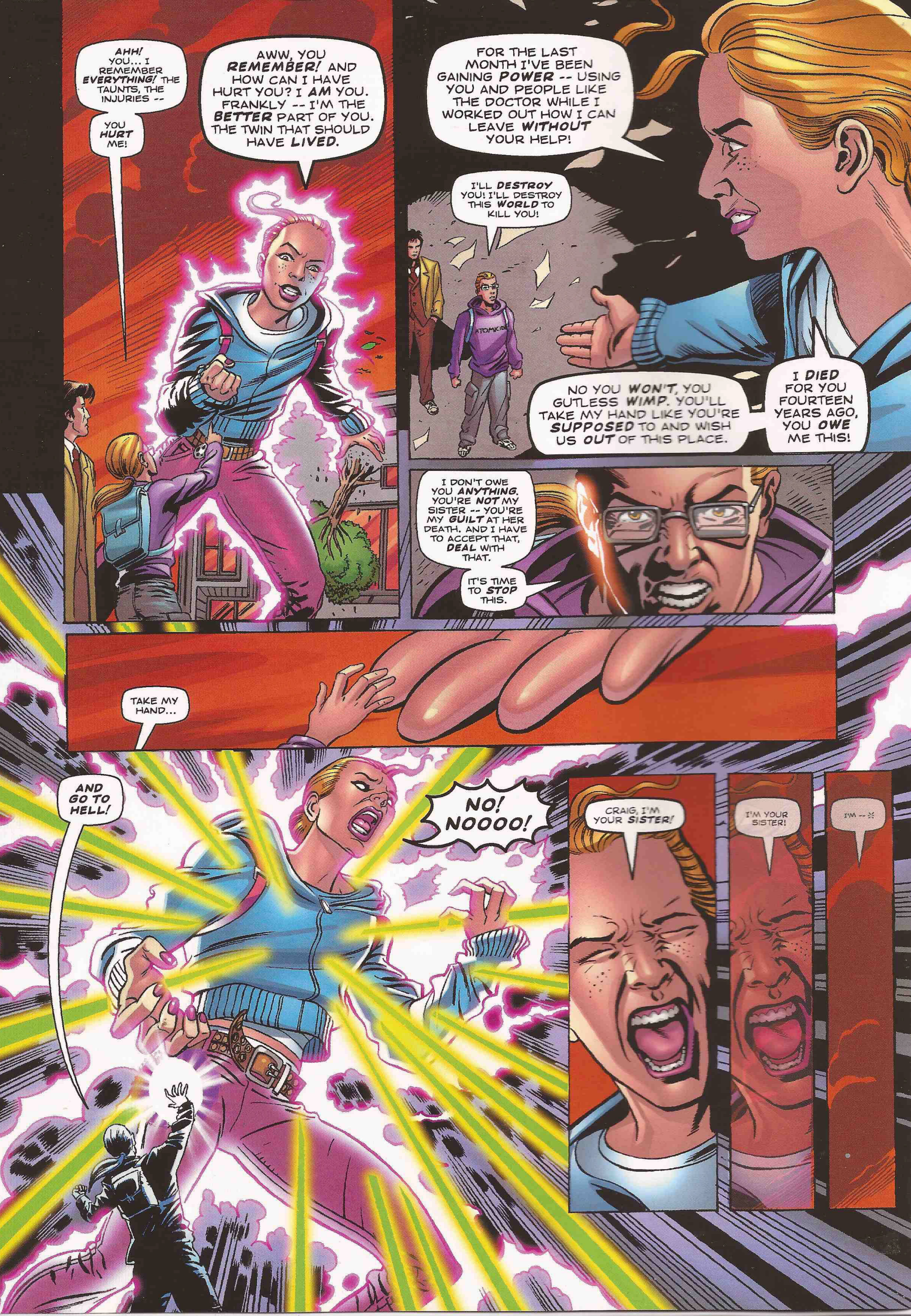

KLANNG!
ARRGHHHH!!!
NICE MOVE, TRUDY! I DIDN'T EVEN SEE THAT ONE COMING!
ANYTHING TO HELP.
FWOOSH!
OH, COME ON, YOU GIRL! IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE! OKAY, YOUR ARM FELL OFF -- BUT WHAT IF SHE'D MISSED?
GAAHHRGH!
NOW, THAT'S INTERESTING...
ARE YOU MENTAL? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

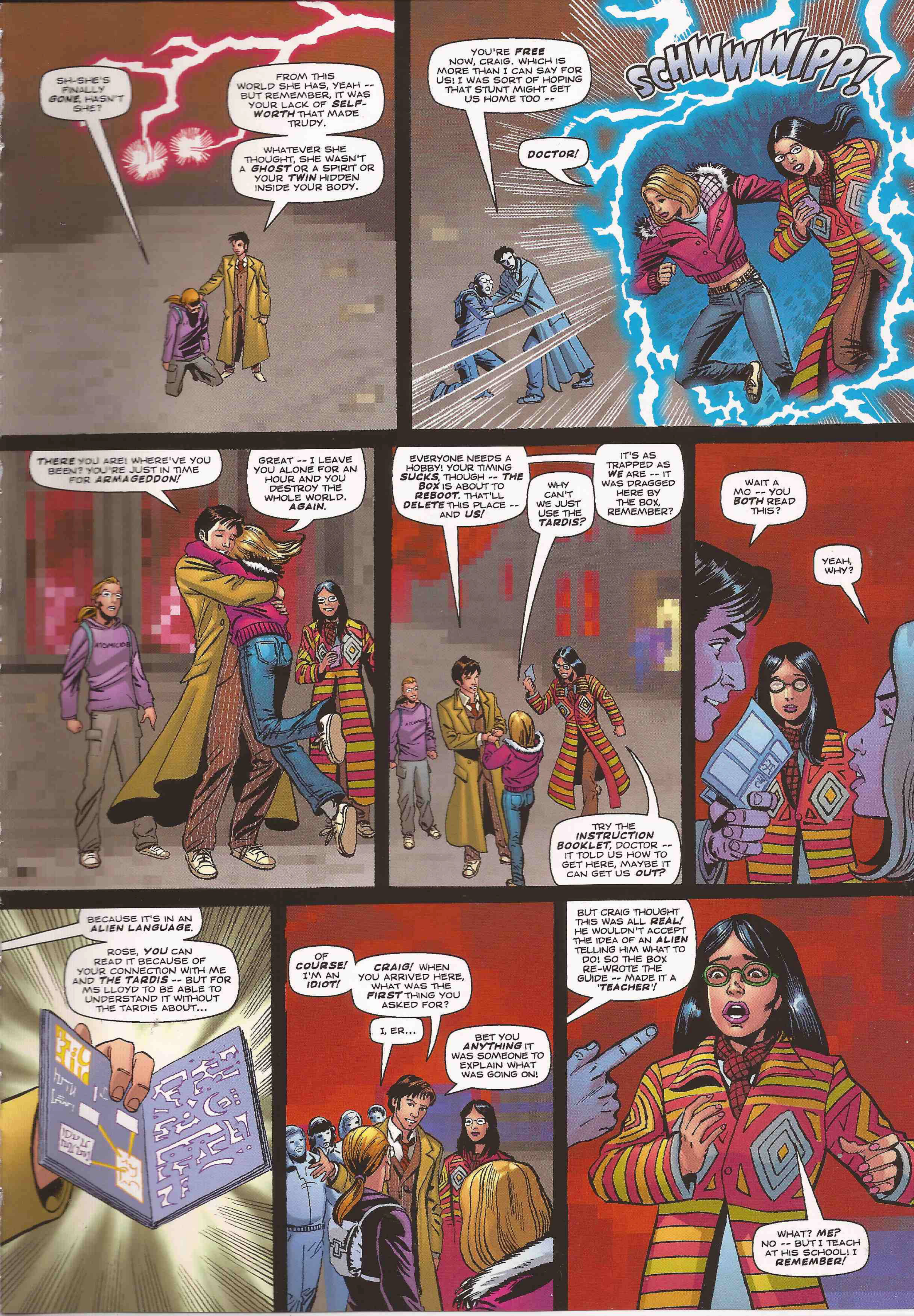

RAR --
FREQUENCY'S JUST OFF -- BUT I THINK I CAN CONTROL THE BOX!
A QUICK TINKER WITH THE SETTINGS -- AND I CAN TINKER WITH THE BEST OF 'EM -- AND HOPEFULLY...
SQUIT!
WHAT IF ALL THE MAKE-BELIEVE MONSTERS WERE IN CAGES?
YOU CAN'T DO THAT! NOBODY CAN DO THAT!
I'M THE ONLY ONE! TRUDY TOLD ME!
HEY! THIS AIN'T FUNNY!
WELL, THAT'S JUST A WEE BIT TELLING, INNIT, TRUDY? PROOF YOU'RE AS MAKE-BELIEVE AS THAT BIG FELLA THERE -- A FIGMENT OF CRAIG'S IMAGINATION MADE FLESH!
AND A MONSTER, APPARENTLY...
STOP! YOU'RE SPOILING THE GAME! LEAVE NOW!
AH, BUT I CAN'T LEAVE, CAN I? ONLY YOU CAN DO THAT, CRAIGY-BOY. AND THAT'S WHY TRUDY WANTS TO BE HOLDING YOUR HAND WHEN YOU DO.
SHE THINKS IT'S HER TICKET OUT OF HERE.
YOU DIDN'T KILL ROSE AND MS LLOYD -- YOU JUST EXPELLED THEM FROM THE GAME. AND TRUDY THINKS IF YOU DID THAT FOR HER...
SHE COULD BECOME A REAL GIRL. A PINOCCHIO IN A SKIRT.
THE THING IS, WITH THE QUANTUM WORKINGS OF THE BOX SO DISRUPTED, IT MIGHT EVEN BE POSSIBLE.
I STILL... DON'T REMEMBER YOU.
WELL, THAT'S EASILY FIXED. JUST ASK --
NOT RIGHT NOW, EH? YOU JUST STAY THERE AND BE A GOOD LITTLE FIGMENT, OKAY?
C'MON, CRAIG, WE NEED TO GO ON A LITTLE TRIP...
ASK THE QUESTION!

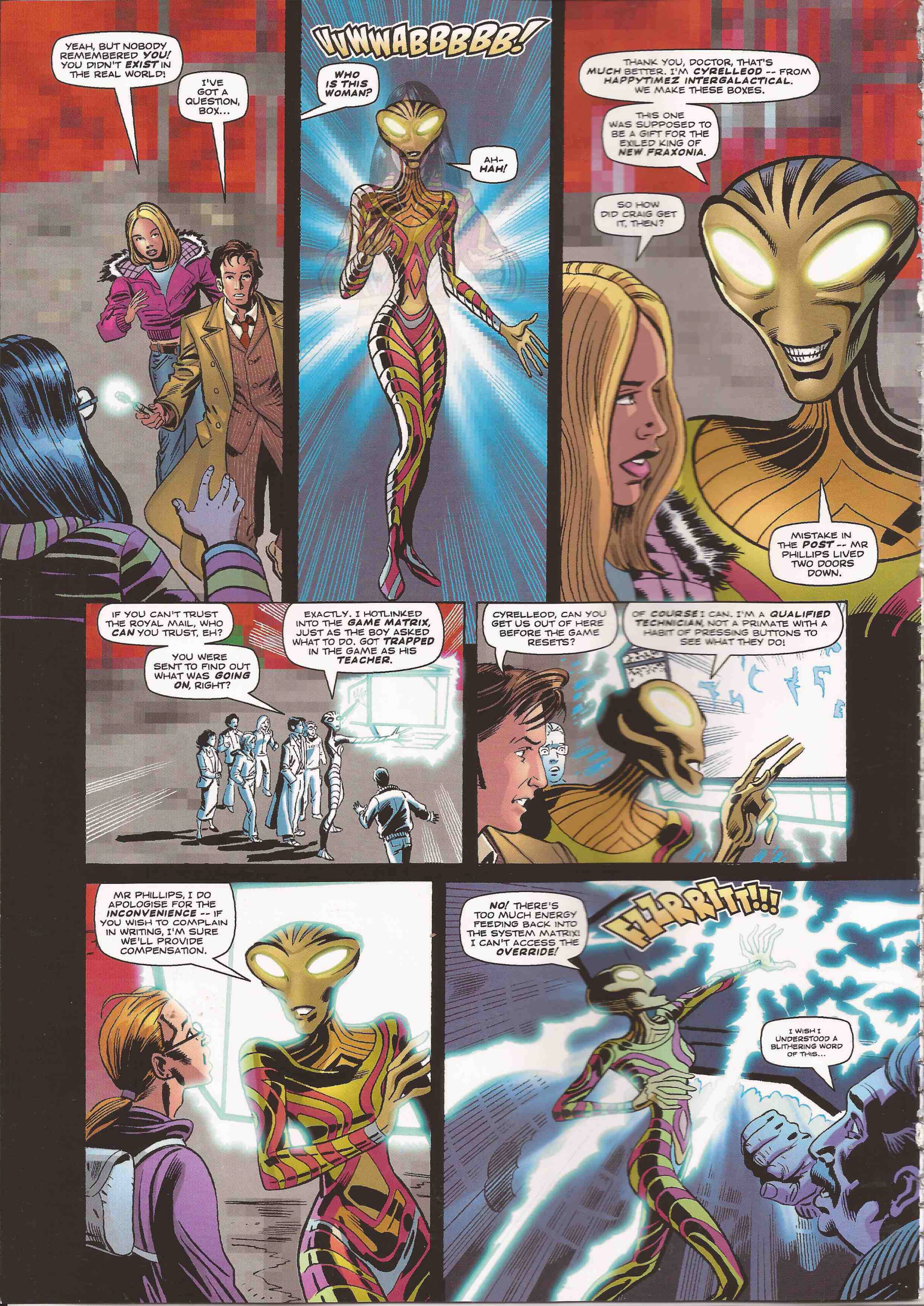

"I NEED TO GET OUT!"
WE NEED TO GET IN.
IF THOSE RULES ARE RIGHT, THERE'S NO WAY EVEN THE DOCTOR CAN END THE GAME SAFELY.
IF I PRESS THESE IN THE ORDER SHOWN, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET BACK TO OUR LAST 'SAVED POINT' -- OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY.
ALTHOUGH I COULD EQUALLY BE SENDING US ANYWHERE...
WE STILL HAVE TO TRY. HE'D DO IT FOR ME. AND BESIDES...
"...GOD KNOWS WHAT TROUBLE HE'S GOT HIMSELF INTO WITHOUT ME..."
WHERE ARE WE?
THINK OF IT AS A KIND OF EXISTENTIAL DEVELOPER'S MENU. WHERE THE BOX'S CREATORS CAN PLAY WITH THE SETTINGS.
THIS OUGHT TO GIVE US A BETTER PERSPECTIVE ON THINGS.
WHAT SORT OF THINGS?
HOW EXCITING THE REAL WORLD CAN BE. WILL BE, CRAIG.
WE'LL HAVE A LOOK AT YOUR FUTURE.
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE. AROUND, OOH, 2034. MEET THE CRAIG PHILLIPS WHO LET EVERYTHING GET TO HIM.
SLEEPING ROUGH, HOMELESS, DRUNK AND OUT OF HIS MIND.
SO... SO TRUDY WAS RIGHT. I AM A LOSER.
SHE'S ONLY RIGHT IF YOU WIMP OUT AFTER ONE POSSIBLE FUTURE! LET'S SEE SOME OTHERS, EH?
MEET CRAIG PHILLIPS. LATE TWENTIES. SELLS LIES FOR MONEY IN A TELESALES OFFICE.
HATES HIS JOB. OLD BEFORE HIS TIME. DREAMS OF BEING A CARPENTER OF ALL THINGS.
THIS IS TERRIBLE! I DON'T WANT THIS! SHOW ME A BETTER ONE!
ATOMIKID
I'M SURE I SAID A BETTER ONE...
THIS IS THE MOST LIKELY OF ALL YOUR FUTURES, CRAIG. YOU DON'T LIVE, YOU JUST... STOP.
YOU GIVE IN.

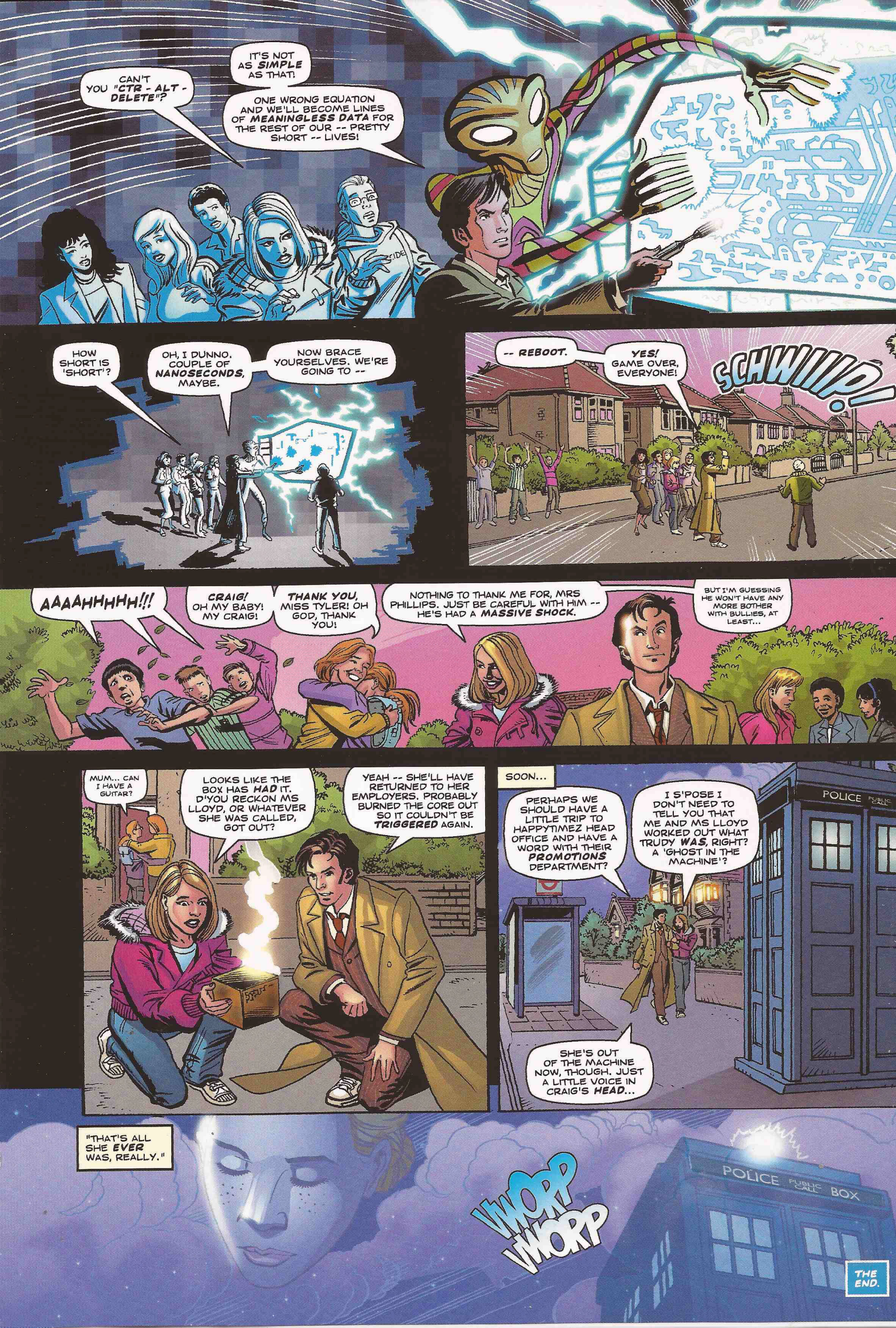

COMPARED TO *THAT*, EVERY ONE OF YOUR POSSIBLE FUTURES IS AN *IMPROVEMENT!*
BECAUSE YOU'LL BE *ALIVE*. AND WHERE THERE'S *LIFE*...
FOUR YEARS FROM NOW -- AND YOUR BAND, *'SHATTERED GLASS'*, PLAY LIVE ON TV.
YOU ONLY MAKE IT TO NUMBER 22, BUT STILL, YOU GET ON *TOP OF THE POPS* AND ALL THE GIRLS FANCY YOU!
BUT I CAN'T PLAY GUITAR!
top of the
CRAIG
MICIDE
YET.
A *DIFFERENT* 2034. CRAIG PHILLIPS, SUCCESSFUL CARPENTER, PLAYS IN THE PARK WITH HIS CHILDREN.
SO MANY POSSIBILITIES...
EXACTLY! YOUR FUTURE IS *OPEN, FLUID* -- THE BOX CAN'T GIVE YOU A DEFINITIVE ONE BECAUSE THERE *ISN'T* ONE YET...
THERE'S *ONE CONSTANT* IN ALL OF THESE BETTER FUTURES. YOU'RE NOT LETTING AN *IMAGINARY GIRL* TELL YOU WHAT TO DO!
BUT THE FUTURE ISN'T EVERYTHING. LET'S SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE *REAL WORLD* RIGHT NOW...
THIS ISN'T REAL -- MY MUM *NEVER* LOVED ME. SHE ALWAYS *BLAMED* ME FOR TRUDY'S DEATH...
I DON'T THINK THAT'S TRUE, CRAIG. THAT'S WHAT *TRUDY* TOLD YOU.
ATOMICIDE
BUT IF YOU DON'T GO BACK, YOU'LL *NEVER* KNOW FOR SURE, WILL YOU?
TAKE US BACK TO THE STREET, CRAIG...

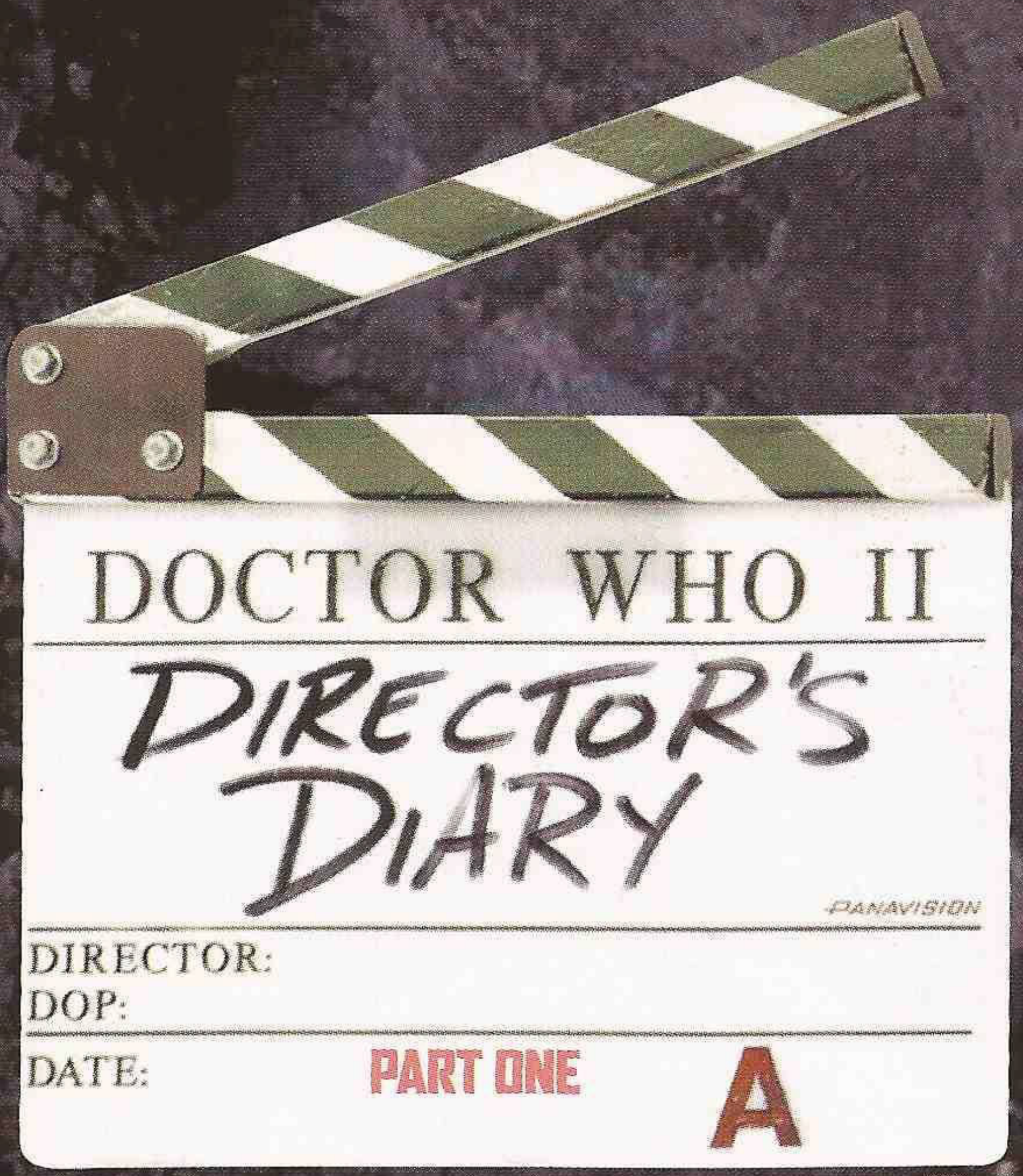

...I THINK YOU'VE SEEN ENOUGH.
WHAT'S GOING ON? THIS ISN'T ANYTHING TO DO WITH ME!
RUMBLERUMMBLRMMBLE!
MY GUESS IS IT'S PROBABLY MORE TO DO WITH HER!
HIYA, TRUDY! PUTTING ON A BIT OF WEIGHT?
YOU CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT ME! I WON'T ALLOW THE GAME TO END!
DOCTOR! IS THAT TRUDY? SHE'S... ULP... QUITE TALL, ISN'T SHE?
AND ANGRY. SHE SEEMS RATHER ANGRY...
LAURIE, GET EVERYONE BACK INSIDE! BEFORE SHE STEPS ON SOMEONE!
JUST TELL ME -- WOULD ALL THIS STOP IF I DID WHAT SHE WANTED?
PROBABLY NOT. SHE'S DRAWING MASSES OF POWER FROM THE BOX NOW. THIS WHOLE PLACE IS CRACKING APART. I'M NOT SURE ANY OF US ARE GETTING OUT...
AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT HER, CRAIG. DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING THAT COULD STOP HER?
IT'S JUST... EVERY TIME I SEE HER, I FEEL SICK. I KNOW THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HER, DOCTOR. ABOUT HER AND ME. BUT IT'S SOMETHING BAD, AND I DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER...
I CAN'T MAKE YOU DO THIS, CRAIG. I'M NOT EVEN SURE IT'LL SAVE ANY OF US. BUT FOR YOUR SAKE, FOR THE SAKE OF ALL THOSE FUTURES...
YOU HAVE TO FACE UP TO YOUR PAST, AND FACE UP TO TRUDY.
I -- I WON'T BE SCARED ANYMORE, DOCTOR. THERE'S A LIFE OUT THERE FOR ME. I KNOW THAT NOW. SO...
WHAT IF I REMEMBERED EVERYTHING ABOUT TRUDY?!


AHH! YOU... I REMEMBER EVERYTHING! THE TAUNTS, THE INJURIES --
YOU HURT ME!
AWW, YOU REMEMBER! AND HOW CAN I HAVE HURT YOU? I AM YOU. FRANKLY -- I'M THE BETTER PART OF YOU. THE TWIN THAT SHOULD HAVE LIVED.
FOR THE LAST MONTH I'VE BEEN GAINING POWER -- USING YOU AND PEOPLE LIKE THE DOCTOR WHILE I WORKED OUT HOW I CAN LEAVE WITHOUT YOUR HELP!
I'LL DESTROY YOU! I'LL DESTROY THIS WORLD TO KILL YOU!
ATOMCIDE
NO YOU WON'T, YOU GUTLESS WIMP. YOU'LL TAKE MY HAND LIKE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO AND WISH US OUT OF THIS PLACE.
I DIED FOR YOU FOURTEEN YEARS AGO, YOU OWE ME THIS!
I DON'T OWE YOU ANYTHING. YOU'RE NOT MY SISTER -- YOU'RE MY GUILT AT HER DEATH. AND I HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT, DEAL WITH THAT.
IT'S TIME TO STOP THIS.
TAKE MY HAND...
AND GO TO HELL!
NO! NOOOO!
CRAIG, I'M YOUR SISTER!
I'M YOUR SISTER!
I'M -- *


SH-SHE'S FINALLY GONE, HASN'T SHE?
FROM THIS WORLD SHE HAS, YEAH -- BUT REMEMBER, IT WAS YOUR LACK OF SELF-WORTH THAT MADE TRUDY.
WHATEVER SHE THOUGHT, SHE WASN'T A GHOST OR A SPIRIT OR YOUR TWIN HIDDEN INSIDE YOUR BODY.
YOU'RE FREE NOW, CRAIG. WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR US! I WAS SORT OF HOPING THAT STUNT MIGHT GET US HOME TOO --
SCHWWWIPP!
DOCTOR!
THERE YOU ARE! WHERE'VE YOU BEEN? YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR ARMAGEDDON!
GREAT -- I LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR AN HOUR AND YOU DESTROY THE WHOLE WORLD. AGAIN.
ATOMICIDE
EVERYONE NEEDS A HOBBY! YOUR TIMING SUCKS, THOUGH -- THE BOX IS ABOUT TO REBOOT. THAT'LL DELETE THIS PLACE -- AND US!
WHY CAN'T WE JUST USE THE TARDIS?
IT'S AS TRAPPED AS WE ARE -- IT WAS DRAGGED HERE BY THE BOX, REMEMBER?
TRY THE INSTRUCTION BOOKLET, DOCTOR -- IT TOLD US HOW TO GET HERE, MAYBE IT CAN GET US OUT?
WAIT A MO -- YOU BOTH READ THIS?
YEAH, WHY?
BECAUSE IT'S IN AN ALIEN LANGUAGE.
ROSE, YOU CAN READ IT BECAUSE OF YOUR CONNECTION WITH ME AND THE TARDIS -- BUT FOR MS LLOYD TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND IT WITHOUT THE TARDIS ABOUT...
OF COURSE! I'M AN IDIOT!
CRAIG! WHEN YOU ARRIVED HERE, WHAT WAS THE FIRST THING YOU ASKED FOR?
I, ER...
BET YOU ANYTHING IT WAS SOMEONE TO EXPLAIN WHAT WAS GOING ON!
BUT CRAIG THOUGHT THIS WAS ALL REAL! HE WOULDN'T ACCEPT THE IDEA OF AN ALIEN TELLING HIM WHAT TO DO! SO THE BOX RE-WROTE THE GUIDE -- MADE IT A 'TEACHER'!
WHAT? ME? NO -- BUT I TEACH AT HIS SCHOOL! I REMEMBER!


YEAH, BUT NOBODY REMEMBERED *YOU*! YOU DIDN'T *EXIST* IN THE REAL WORLD!
I'VE GOT A QUESTION, BOX...
VVWWABBBBB!
WHO IS THIS WOMAN?
AH-*HAH!*
THANK YOU, DOCTOR, THAT'S *MUCH* BETTER. I'M *CYRELLEOD* -- FROM *HAPPYTIMEZ INTERGALACTICAL*. WE MAKE THESE BOXES.
THIS ONE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A GIFT FOR THE EXILED KING OF *NEW FRAXONIA*.
SO HOW DID CRAIG GET IT, THEN?
MISTAKE IN THE *POST* -- MR PHILLIPS LIVED TWO DOORS DOWN.
IF YOU CAN'T TRUST THE ROYAL MAIL, WHO *CAN* YOU TRUST, EH?
YOU WERE SENT TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS *GOING ON*, RIGHT?
EXACTLY. I HOTLINKED INTO THE *GAME MATRIX*, JUST AS THE BOY ASKED WHAT TO DO. GOT *TRAPPED* IN THE GAME AS HIS *TEACHER*.
CYRELLEOD, CAN YOU GET US OUT OF HERE BEFORE THE GAME RESETS?
OF *COURSE* I CAN. I'M A *QUALIFIED TECHNICIAN*, NOT A PRIMATE WITH A HABIT OF PRESSING BUTTONS TO SEE WHAT THEY DO!
MR PHILLIPS, I DO APOLOGISE FOR THE *INCONVENIENCE* -- IF YOU WISH TO COMPLAIN IN WRITING, I'M SURE WE'LL PROVIDE COMPENSATION.
NO! THERE'S TOO MUCH ENERGY FEEDING BACK INTO THE SYSTEM MATRIX! I CAN'T ACCESS THE *OVERRIDE!*
FZZRRRTTT!!!
I WISH I UNDERSTOOD A BLITHERING WORD OF THIS...


CAN'T YOU "CTR - ALT - DELETE"?
IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS THAT!
ONE WRONG EQUATION AND WE'LL BECOME LINES OF MEANINGLESS DATA FOR THE REST OF OUR -- PRETTY SHORT -- LIVES!
HOW SHORT IS 'SHORT'?
OH, I DUNNO. COUPLE OF NANOSECONDS, MAYBE.
NOW BRACE YOURSELVES. WE'RE GOING TO --
-- REBOOT.
YES! GAME OVER, EVERYONE!
SCHWIIIP!
AAAAHHHHH!!!
CRAIG! OH MY BABY! MY CRAIG!
THANK YOU, MISS TYLER! OH GOD, THANK YOU!
NOTHING TO THANK ME FOR, MRS PHILLIPS. JUST BE CAREFUL WITH HIM -- HE'S HAD A MASSIVE SHOCK.
BUT I'M GUESSING HE WON'T HAVE ANY MORE BOTHER WITH BULLIES, AT LEAST...
MUM... CAN I HAVE A GUITAR?
LOOKS LIKE THE BOX HAS HAD IT. D'YOU RECKON MS LLOYD, OR WHATEVER SHE WAS CALLED, GOT OUT?
YEAH -- SHE'LL HAVE RETURNED TO HER EMPLOYERS. PROBABLY BURNED THE CORE OUT SO IT COULDN'T BE TRIGGERED AGAIN.
SOON...
PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE A LITTLE TRIP TO HAPPYTIMEZ HEAD OFFICE AND HAVE A WORD WITH THEIR PROMOTIONS DEPARTMENT?
I S'POSE I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU THAT ME AND MS LLOYD WORKED OUT WHAT TRUDY WAS, RIGHT? A 'GHOST IN THE MACHINE'?
POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX
SHE'S OUT OF THE MACHINE NOW, THOUGH. JUST A LITTLE VOICE IN CRAIG'S HEAD...
"THAT'S ALL SHE EVER WAS, REALLY."
VWORP VWORP
POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX
THE END.



WELCOME TO HELL

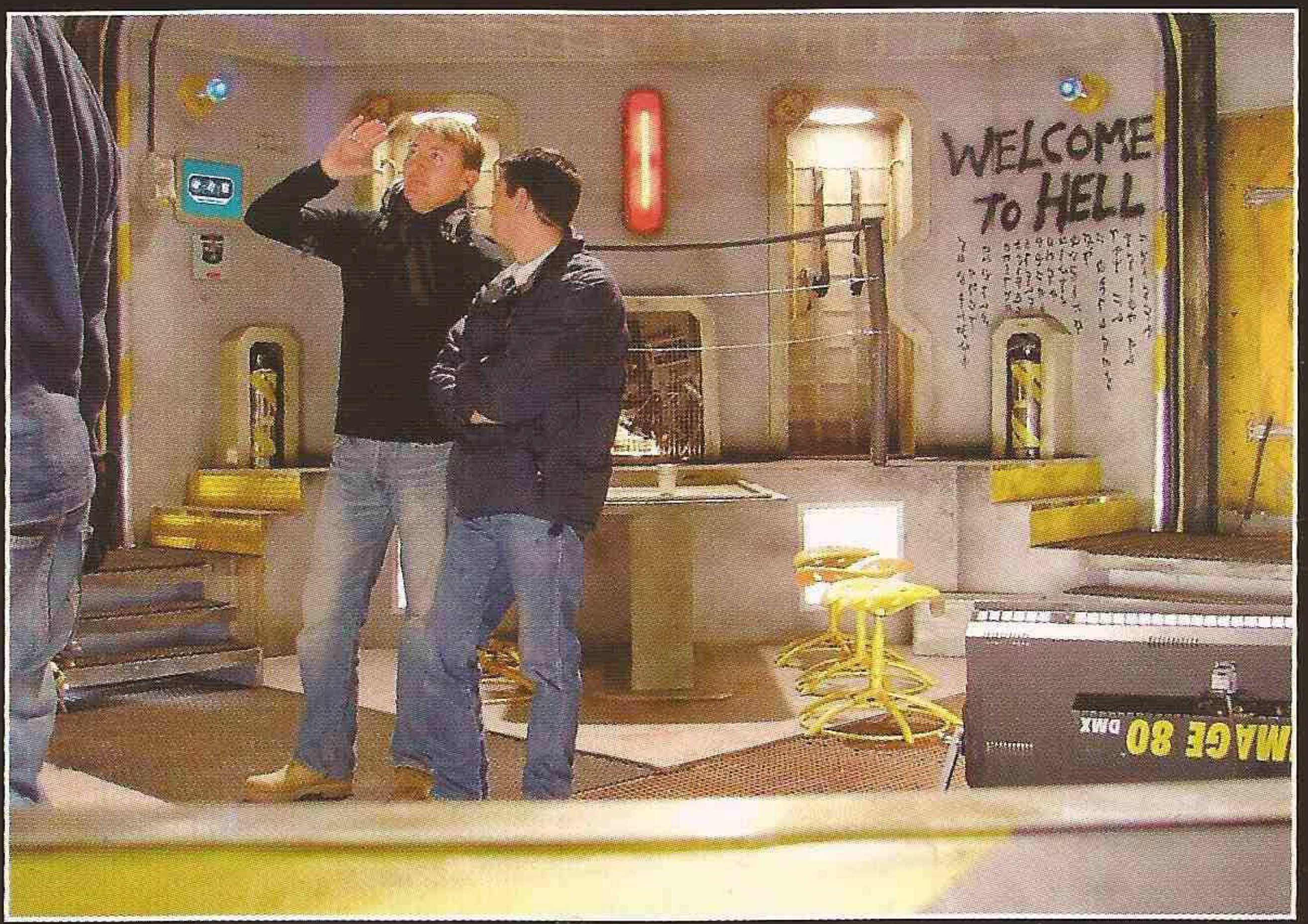
Back in January, while he was preparing to start work on *The Impossible Planet* and *The Satan Pit*, director **James Strong** started writing a diary. Now, exclusively in **DWM**, James leafs back through the pages, and tells how he and his team achieved the impossible...

15 JANUARY 2006

First day on *Doctor Who*. That's a good thing to write in your diary! I still can't quite believe that I'm doing this show. I'm thrilled, nervous, and excited all at once. This sags slightly as the taxi drops me off at the wrong building, but, after half an hour in some light Cardiff drizzle, I arrive at BBC Llandaff, where I'm greeted by Phil Collinson, the producer, and the friendly office team, and, most importantly, handed a copy of the script. It's titled *The Impossible Planet*. I'm shown to my office, I shut the door, and grab a seat to devour its pages.

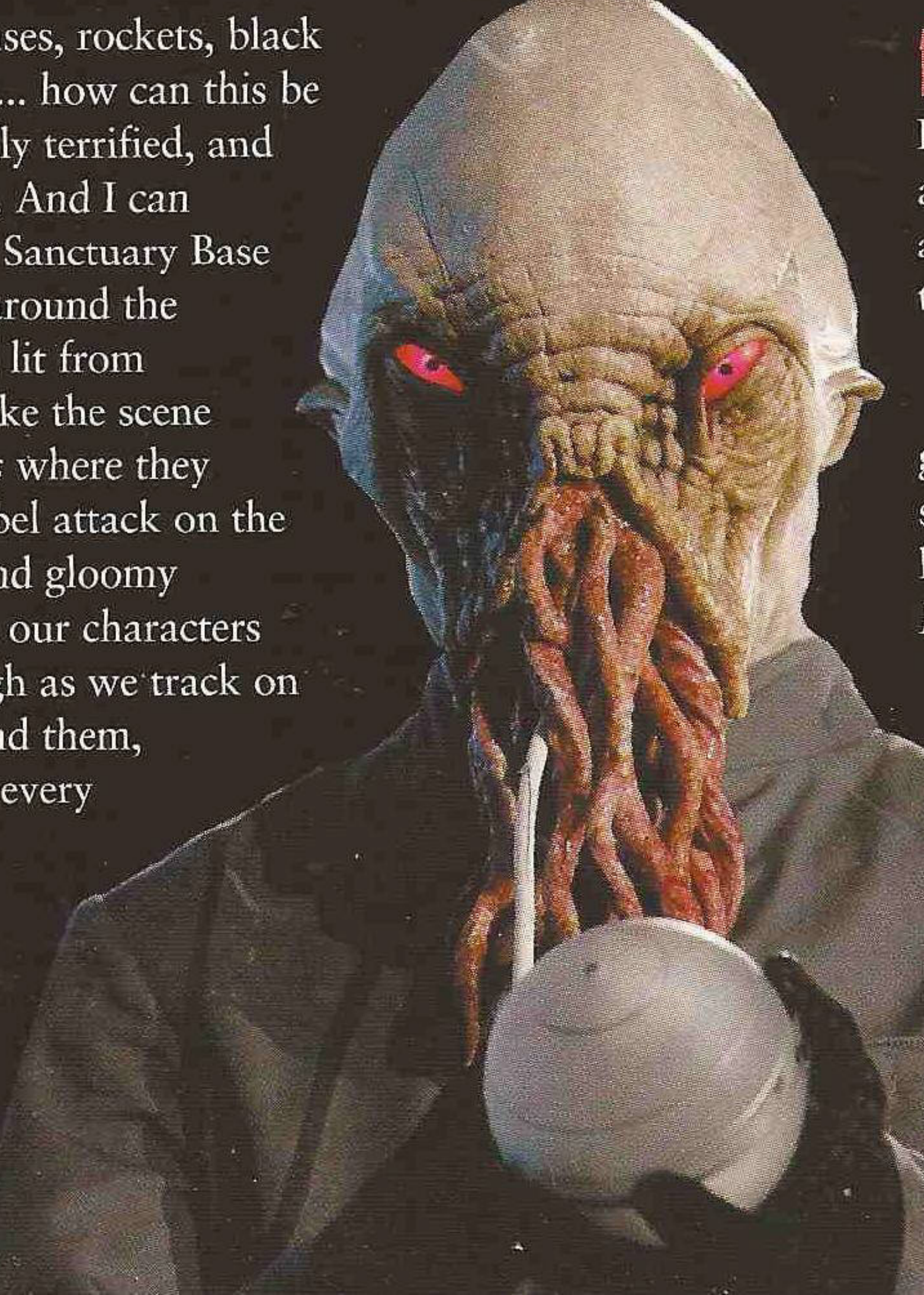
The first reading of a script is really important for me. Those first impressions and ideas are often the ones that stick with you. I try to see it in my head visually for the first time, as the audience will. This script is incredible. It's a sci-fi adventure – seems promising. It's a two-part serial, and it takes place in the far-flung reaches of outer space. Three words in, 'The TARDIS materialises' – and I'm utterly hooked. The Doctor and Rose land on a Sanctuary Base populated by a small human crew, who – it quickly transpires – are on a planet orbiting a black hole. All the time, they're haunted by a mysterious evil, silently stalking their every move...

Pre-production is an odd phase. You tend to feel that the success and failure of an episode happens as you're actually shooting the thing – the missed shot, the wonderful performance – or when you put it together in the edit. But pre-production is where the groundwork takes place – the foundations upon which you'll shoot the episode – and the decisions here will determine, to a greater or lesser degree, how successful or not the end product will be. A bad choice or wrong decision can have terrible implications later on. All those seemingly innocuous decisions – the colour of a set, or a jacket, whether or not to use a second camera, casting choices – all contribute to the end product, and are all just as important. The devil is in the details – quite literally, if you've read this script.



◀ *James Strong on set for **The Impossible Planet's** Sanctuary Base. "Welcome to Hell!"*

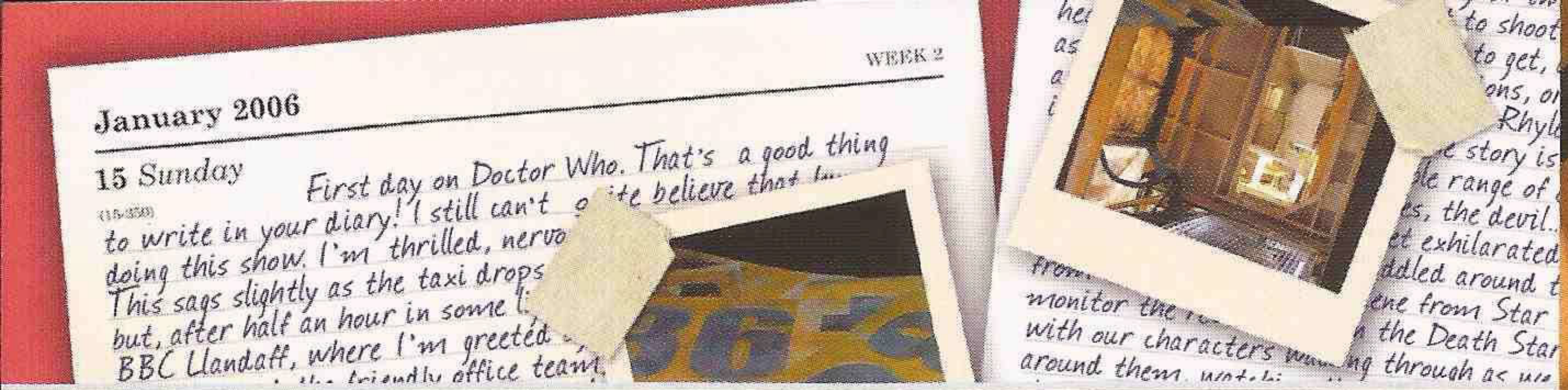
The main things to do are find the right locations, cast the best actors, steer the departments – design, costume, make-up – in the right direction, plan a schedule that will actually allow you to get all the material you need, brief the camera team on the style and feel that you want, and order the right equipment to achieve this, and... and finally work out how the bloody hell you're going to shoot Matt Jones' wonderful script. Reading and re-reading it over and over – getting to know it inside out, back to front, and sideways – is also important at this stage. It allows you to get familiar with the story so that your imagination offers images and pictures, and you can start to shoot the episode in your head. But 'script time' is hard to get, as everyone is constantly asking you a million-and-one questions, or trying to drag you away to look at a chemical plant in Rhyle. However, this script is keeping me awake at night: the story is so interesting, and we move through such an incredible range of emotions and styles. Space bases, rockets, black holes, the devil... how can this be done? I'm totally terrified, and yet exhilarated. And I can already see the Sanctuary Base crew huddled around the central hub, all lit from below – a bit like the scene from *Star Wars* where they monitor the rebel attack on the Death Star – and gloomy corridors, with our characters walking through as we track on long lens around them, watching their every move yet detached and observant. Creepy, very creepy.



16 JANUARY

Design meeting. We pick the script apart, and throw in ideas for every set and space. I bring in all the references that I have – pictures, photos, scribbles, and books – all the things that inspired me. It's a very industrial feel that we're going for, almost like being on a submarine. Russell T Davies says that he wants this to be our homage to *Das Boot*, only more beautiful. Das 'beautiful' boot!

At this early stage, it's important to gather references and tones to set the mood of the piece, in order to work out how I intend to tell the ▶


WEEK 2
January 2006
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(15-350)
First day on Doctor Who. That's a good thing
to write in your diary! I still can't quite believe that I
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◀ story – literally, what shots and style I'm going to use, the tone, feel, and vibe (good word!) of the piece. I liken it to music. What is the tune of this piece? For this, it's Holst's *The Bringer of War* – a god-almighty cataclysm of worlds colliding, and the end of the universe. It's a dark, claustrophobic story, with a band of foolhardy humans surviving against the odds. God, I love this script. And space truckers make me think of *Alien*, so I revisit the Ridley Scott film – a master class in restraint, and execution of tone and mood, as well as still being the scariest movie that I've ever seen. It was so modern for its time.

17 JANUARY

Meet the art department. The innocuous exterior of Unit Q2 – an industrial complex in Newport, South Wales – belies the feast of treasures inside. It's a rather grubby, untidy place, yet retains a strange charm, not least due to the rather incredible TARDIS set. It reminds me of a beautiful cathedral – a somewhat solemn yet spiritual and ultimately inspiring place. It's beautiful. I will finish my shoot on the set, and will shoot the last ever scene on it before it is moved to the new studios being used for Series Three.

The art department is geek heaven. Sorry, lads! I do love 'em, but they all look like they've been deprived of sunlight and human contact. They're so into their work – and it's worth it. This is the heart and soul of the show. I wander around the office and am quietly blown away by the drawings, sketches, and scraps of design that adorn the walls. Every aspect of the production, down to a light switch or a bracelet, has been designed and considered as part of the show. Everyone is very excited about these episodes. It's the first time that they've had the chance to do a 'full on sci-fi adventure'. Brilliant!

That night, I plough through all of the 'making-of' documentaries on the *Alien* DVD Box Set. Very helpful. The production designer of the original *Alien* tells of how they had no money, and made the corridor sets look longer by the judicious use of bathroom mirrors. Note to self: this will come in very handy later.

18 JANUARY

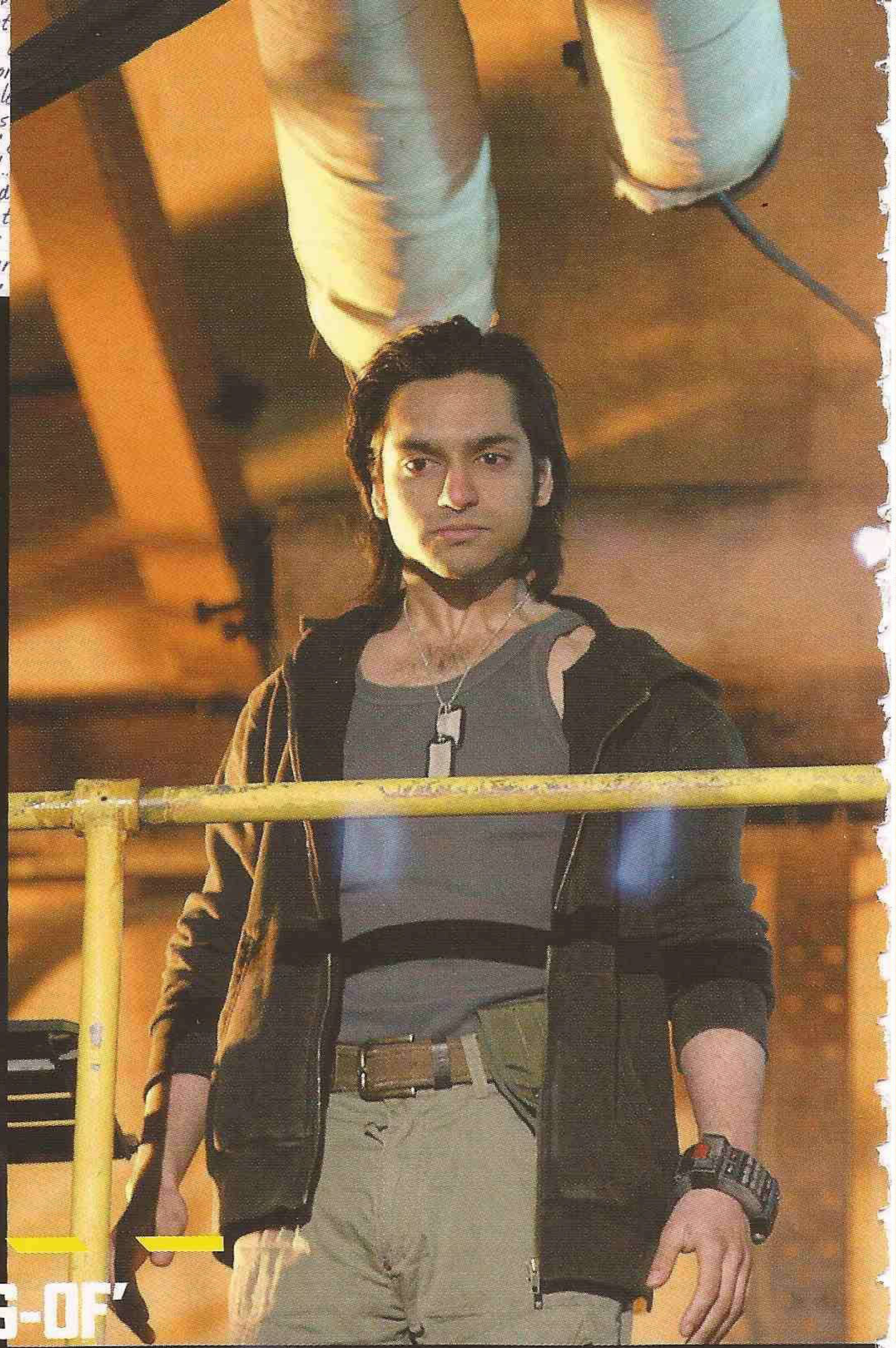
Location, location, location! In an average block, the budget and schedule determine that half of our sets will be built, but the others need to be *found* – real locations transformed to fit. As it's a sci-fi story not set in any recognisable places, ideally we'd build them as sets, but we don't live in an ideal world; we live on an impossible planet, so we have to make some and find the others. So Lowri Thomas (locations manager) and I are driving around South Wales looking for a quarry, and suitable locations for the Bore Room and an Ood holding pen. Not as easy as it sounds. The production demands that we have to shoot near(ish) the production office, and, because of the tight schedule and budget, we've a lot of locations to find. This will give Ed Thomas (production designer) and the art department the chance to build the other sets, and, importantly, change them around while we're out of the studio and on location. The hunt is on!

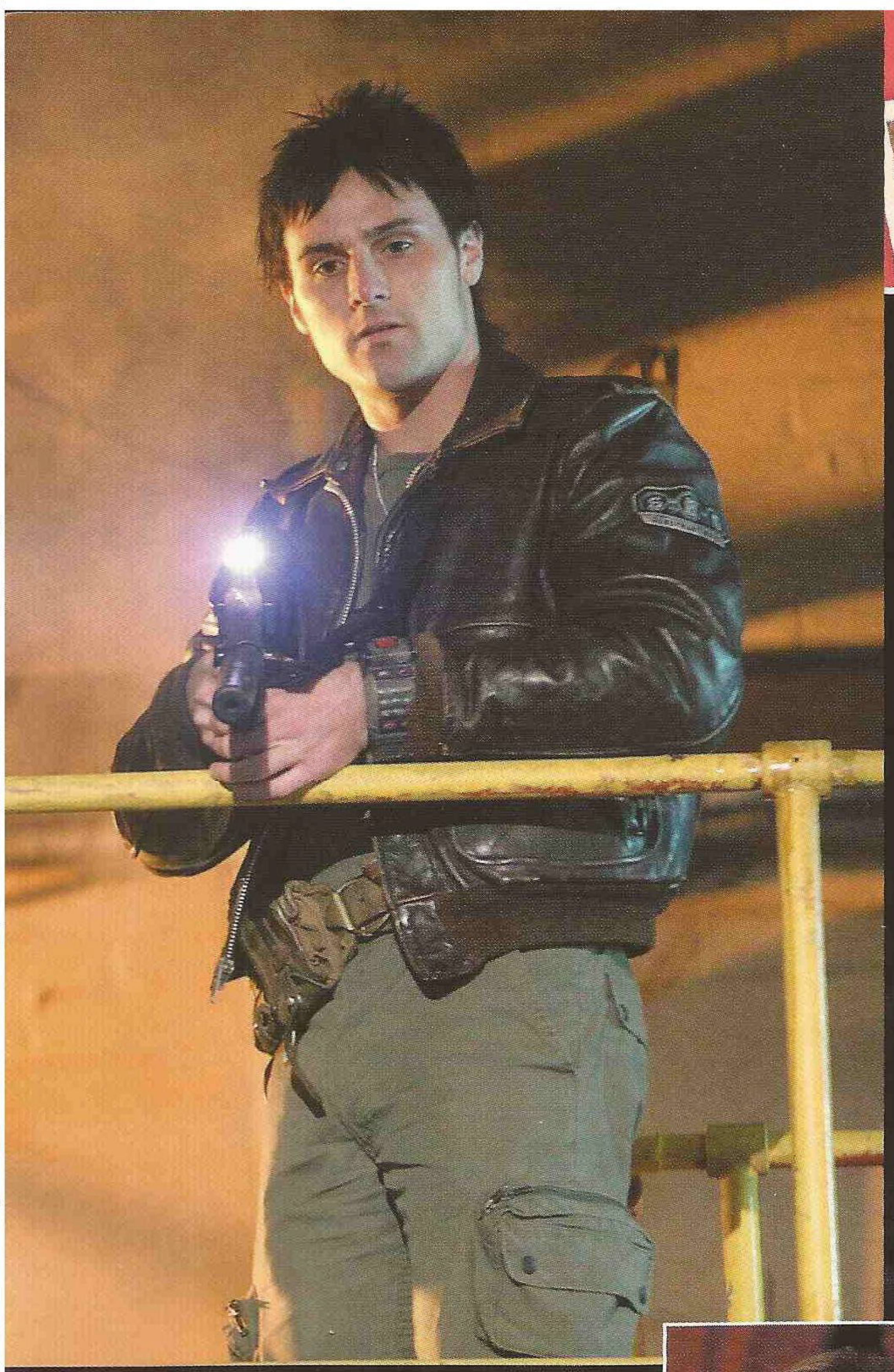
20 JANUARY

First casting discussion. Phil and I travel to London and meet with our casting director, Andy Pryor. We run through the script and discuss the roles, their respective sizes, and suggestions. We're then joined through the miracle of technology by executive producers Julie Gardner and Russell on a conference call... except the 'miracle' doesn't quite work, and after a chat with a taxi firm in Reading we get down to business.

As a two-parter with an ensemble cast, getting together the right combination of personalities is crucial. We have to believe that this crew of plucky humans could be living on a planet in the harshest of circumstances. We are after very 'real' performers. I feel terrible: I don't recognise half the names that Phil and Andy are mentioning. Eventually, a list of first choices is drawn up. The list is split into those parts that we'll offer straight to the actors, and those for which we'll hold auditions.

"I PLOUGH THROUGH ALL THE 'MAKING-OF' DOCUMENTARIES ON THE ALIEN DVD BOX SET. THIS WILL COME IN VERY HANDY LATER..."





▲ *The dark claustrophobic feel of this story was inspired by the first Alien movie.*

◀ *On set, David Tennant records the chit-chat on his camcorder.*

▶ *Inset: There was much discussion over the right 'look' for security chief Jefferson.*

▶ *Far right: James had originally imagined the Ood as 'albino human-type creatures'.*

▼ *Shaun Parkes as Zack...*

22 JANUARY

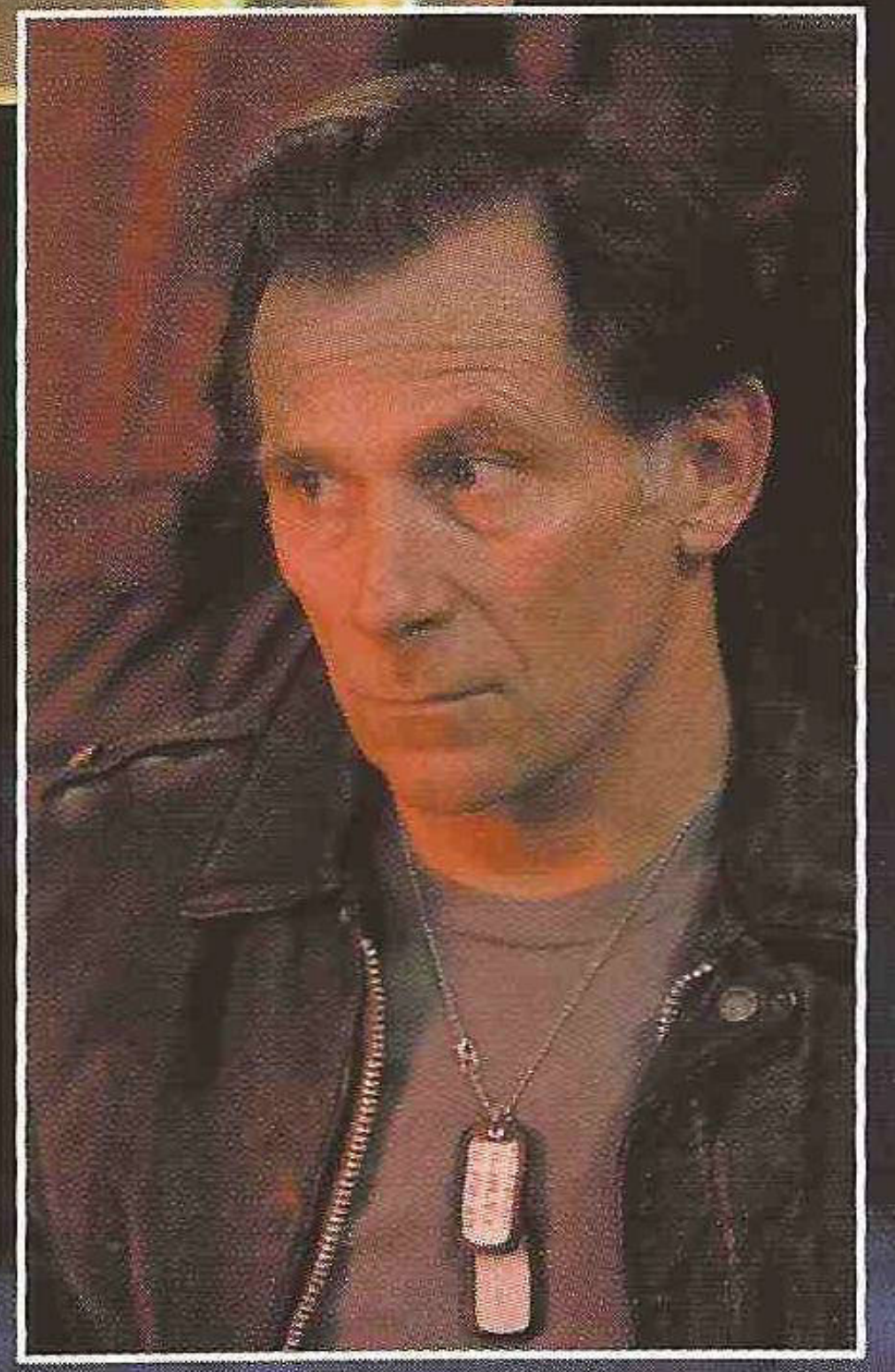
Tone meeting. On most productions, the one thing that you crave is an opportunity to sit and discuss the script with the originator or visionary of the show. On *Doctor Who*, we all sit around a table with Russell and Julie, and page-turn the script. It's a brilliant exercise, as all the major departments are there too – some I meet for the first time – and so we're all heading in the same direction from the off.

"One word I want to say for these episodes," says Russell, "and that word is: 'tough!'" These episodes must be tough, hard, and real. Too often, sci-fi is slick, cool, easy, and *Star Trek* calm. This place – this space station – should feel dangerous, and loud, and shaking, pre-fabricated, and quite literally clinging onto the side of the planet.

The director of photography and I discuss the lighting and colour-range of the episodes. Dark and moody, naturally. Elegant and beautiful – yes, please! But my one request is to reflect the 'real' angle of our sci-fi with very practical lighting, which allows actors to roam and interact without fear of walking out of their light. It's a tricky task, as no DOP wants an actor half-lit, but it's important that this crew can move around their space station just like it's their home – which it is. And we plan to limit the use of colour in certain areas, as the wrong colour in the wrong place can suggest the wrong thing. I want edgy and atmospheric, but I'm aware that it's BBC One on Saturday night – we can't have everyone in darkness the whole time.

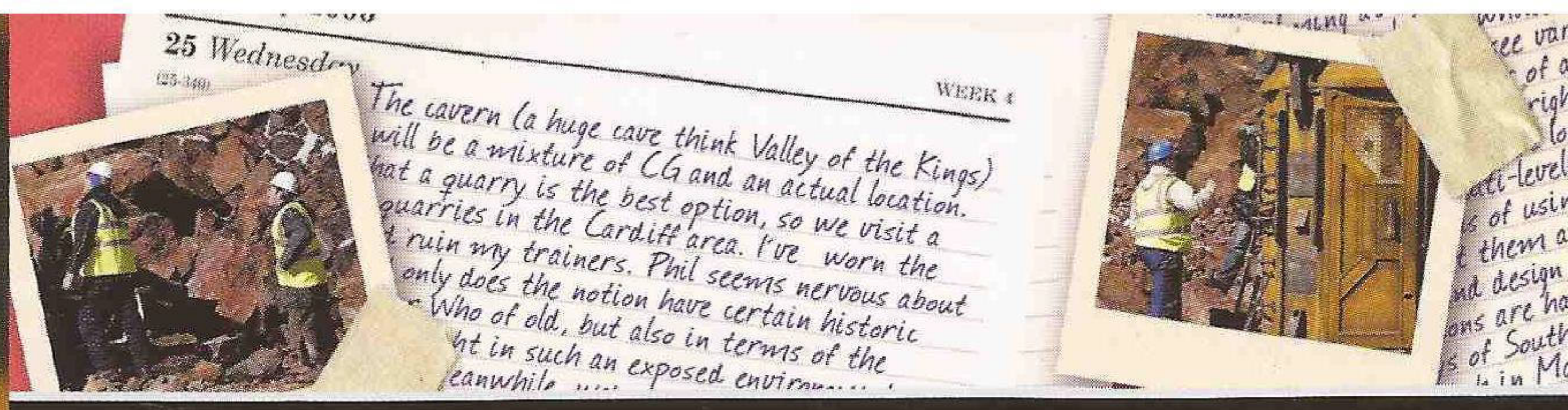
The first images of the Ood, our resident alien race, are handed round at the meeting. I was thinking of a kind of albino human-type creature, with piercing red eyes, but what Neill Gorton (prosthetics) delivers is far, far more impressive: a totally new alien race, a large flesh-like head with great prongs falling down – utterly horrifying, and yet they have this terribly sad quality to them. Perfect.

Louise Page (costume designer) and I grab a few minutes after the meeting to go through ideas. Costumes are so important, and so easily got wrong. I fall in love with Louse immediately. We want tough, sexy work-wear, with big boots, belts and jackets. It must be practical, and yet look good on our cast. Once again, we agree to limit the colour palette of their clothes; greys, black, olive greens, and sandy browns, all to complement the set and lighting, and to reinforce the mood. A big question, though, is how to make Jefferson, the head of security, feel like a man in authority without a dead obvious military, police or security uniform. We agree to think on.



23 JANUARY

Design consultation. What a joy it is to sit and discuss 'concepts' – a term that usually you only hear about on full-blown movies. What a joy! The art department are without doubt the finest that I've ever worked with. Their genius is evident every time you walk into their office.


25 Wednesday
(25-340)
WEEK 4
The cavern (a huge cave think Valley of the Kings)
will be a mixture of CG and an actual location.
that a quarry is the best option, so we visit a
quarries in the Cardiff area. I've worn the
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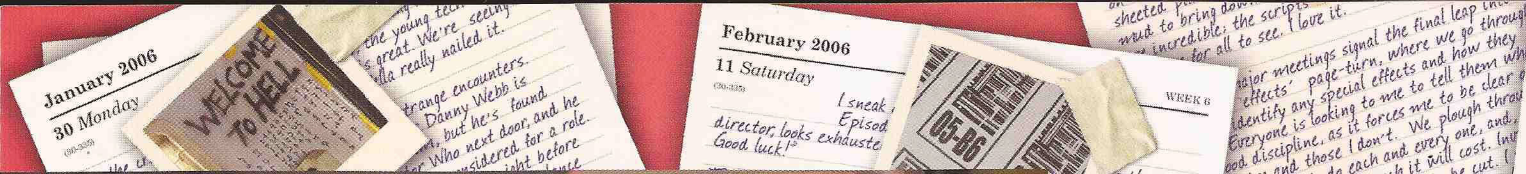
25 JANUARY

The cavern (a huge cave – think Valley of the Kings) will be a mixture of CG and an actual location. We've decided that a quarry is the best option, so we visit a few of the major quarries in the Cardiff area. I've worn the wrong footwear, and ruin my trainers. Phil seems nervous about the quarry idea – not only does the notion have certain historic associations to *Doctor Who* of old, but also in terms of the logistics of filming at night in such an exposed environment, in Wales, in February!

Meanwhile, we're still hunting for Bore Rooms and Ood pens, thus see various factories, and chemical plants, and even a guided tour of a Stella Artois brewery – which was fascinating, but sadly not right. We drive around location-scouting all day. We're looking for somewhere that we can easily turn into a multi-levelled holding pen for an alien race. Any ideas? I'm nervous of using anything too generically 'industrial'. I can spot them a mile off. Our other problem is that the overall feel and design of the episodes is still being formulated, so locations are harder to find than usual. Round and round the valleys of South Wales we trundle. The low point is a McDonald's lunch in Maygor Services. Talk about the end of the Earth!

At the end of a grim day, our moods are lifted immeasurably as we discover a deserted quarry in Trefill. As the sun sets and catches the vast expanses of granite and stone, it feels just like another planet. We quickly call Arwel, the art director, to come and join us. This place is perfect. The only problem is that it's a good hour from base, and access is, to say the least, a challenge. ▶



▲ Rose faces a tough challenge in **The Satan Pit**. Billie Piper told James Strong that the episodes were the scariest she'd done...

29 JANUARY

Reality check. We dragged out Phil, Ed, and the team to see this quarry, but the enormous problem of filming in such a remote and exposed spot comes crashing in. "It's a nightmare," says Phil. And he's right. To make it safe and workable would be a big number. It's totally exposed to all the elements and it's well over an hour from unit base, taking two hours off the shooting day before you can even get out a camera. Despite its grand vistas, it's got to be a 'no'. It's disappointing, as I thought we'd seen all the other alternatives. Back to the drawing board. And everybody got a soaking too. Not a good day.

30 JANUARY

Back in the warmth of a casting room. Meet some potential Dannys, the young tech expert of the crew. One person in particular is great. We're seeing some more later in the week, but this fella really nailed it.

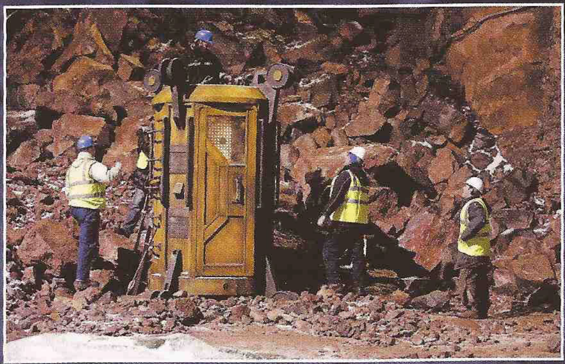
On the way to lunch, I have one of those strange encounters. The *Doctor Who* hand of fate strikes. Actor Danny Webb is sitting outside for a casting for another film, but he's found out, by chance, that we're casting *Doctor Who* next door, and he accosts me as I pass. He's desperate to be considered for a role. I've always loved him in everything, and only the night before saw him in *Alien*^{3}, so process into the casting session, glance down the list of possibles to play the craggy head of security, and who is at the bottom...? Ross Kemp! No, joking, one Danny Webb. Andy P immediately arranges for him to come in the following day.

31 JANUARY

I get to read the second episode. It's called *The Satan Pit*, and it's just brilliant. The evil stalking the crew is claiming to be... the devil. The big man, the ultimate evil. Theological issues aside, I'm reeling about how to realise such a concept. References and DVDs fill my room. *Serenity*, *Battlestar Galactica*, the original *Black Hole*, *Stargate*... even old episodes of *NYPD Blue* on the telly provide insight into the mindset of a team or crew.

2 FEBRUARY

CG meeting at The Mill. Basically, this is a sophisticated bartering session, where Russell, Julie, Phil, and I haggle with The Mill over how many CG shots we're allowed in the episodes. Each shot is a ton of work and costs a fortune, so we're restricted to a certain number, and we have to make sure that they're the *right* ones. It's remarkably painless, as my list is pretty much kept intact. As this is a sci-fi episode, there have to be a lot to tell the story, and the whole climax is to be a CG creation, so it's all extremely positive, even if the schedule has generated a few withering looks. It's going to be *amazing*. Black holes, space rockets, and the ultimate evil.



▼ The surface of the alien planet turns out to be a good old **Doctor Who** quarry!

I grab a coffee with Russell after the meeting. At last, me and the main man, albeit only for 15 minutes! I bombard him with a million questions, some of which are incredibly technical, others just plain dumb. But he patiently answers all my stupid questions with warmth and genuine intelligence. I feel relieved that I think we've the same take on this story – we agree on the style, mood, and tone that we're aiming for.

5 FEBRUARY

The cast is slowly coming into place. We have the lovely Myanna Buring to play Scooti. Myanna was recently in *The Decent*, which I watch this evening and scares me witless. Danny Webb comes in and immediately nails Jefferson. He's so perfect. Later in the day, we hear that Shaun Parkes is giving up his holiday to play Zack, and Will Thorp has agreed to play Toby. This is a real bonus, as Toby is a really tricky part and needs a top man.

7 FEBRUARY

I return to Cardiff to find a small man looking rather concerned in the corner of the production office. This is the wonderful Gareth Williams, my first AD, who's had a look at the schedule, and informs me that it's not a pretty sight. As we're the last block of the series to shoot, there can be no extra days or overruns. Literally, the day that shooting ends, the crew are out of contract, the sets are removed, and everything on Series Two ends. These are really heavy episodes; there isn't a scene without a prosthetic, CG shot, visual effect, or a large ensemble cast. Gareth is worried. Of course, I'm a ridiculous optimist, and tell him that everything will be fine.

11 FEBRUARY

I sneak onto set as the crew is shooting Episodes 12 and 13. Graeme Harper, the director, looks exhausted, but tells me that it's "been a blast. Good luck!"

The art department has been working on drawings of the key sets for my episodes, and visualising the main CGI arenas. For a futuristic episode like this, this is invaluable: you suddenly move from talking in the abstract to being able to make concrete notes. The base is really taking shape. I give a few notes, mainly on the colour of the walls, which I fear could be too light if all sheeted plastic. Ed Thomas assures me they'll be dirtied with mud to bring down the overall hue. The drawings for the cavern are incredible; the scripts' description of a 'valley of the kings' is there for all to see. I love it.

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DOCTOR WHO II
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A series of major meetings signal the final leap into shooting. First, is an 'effects' page-turn, where we go through the script and identify any special effects and how they're to be achieved. Everyone is looking to me to tell them what I want. This is good discipline, as it forces me to be clear on the shots that I require and those I don't. We plough through the script, and work out how to do each and every one, and, crucially, how long it will take, and how much it will cost. Invariably, there are certain scripted effects that have to be cut. I wonder if we'll miss them in the end. I suspect we won't. I'm amazed how efficient everyone is on achieving even the most complex stunt or action.

This afternoon, a breakthrough on the locations: we find a quarry, which, as it's fully working, was previously considered unavailable to us, so we head over, and it's perfect. Well, it's a bit hard to imagine it fully, as it's going to be dark and lit by a monster light. I wander the bottom of these enormous cliffs with Arwel, and we plot the location of the capsule's arrival, and the seal that the Doctor and Ida descend into the cavern and discover.

> **"AS WE'RE THE LAST BLOCK OF THE SERIES TO SHOOT, THERE CAN BE NO OVERRUNS. OF COURSE, I'M A RIDICULOUS OPTIMIST..."**

▲ *The Ood pen was another tricky location for James' team to find.*

▲ *The part of Toby went to former Casualty actor Will Thorp...*

▼ *... while the role of Ida went to Clare Rushbrook.*

12 FEBRUARY

Reality check two. We're filming in less than two weeks, and we've still to find several key locations. More location hunting, and we find a possible Bore Room. Problem is it's hidden under three tons of pigeon crap. It could work, at a push, but it would be the grimmest place I've ever filmed in – and that's saying something.

I go through the equipment list. Phil is keen to use second cameras as much as possible. This is a tricky one, as they can speed things up, but some DOPs resist using a second camera as it slows the lighting time down. Ernie Vinzcze on the phone seems relaxed about the idea. He's obviously done the show before, and I suspect he knows the pressure that we're about to be under. Oh, and more good news: the wonderful Claire Rushbrook is on board to play Ida. Fantastic.

13 FEBRUARY

Production meeting. This is the big one. The whole crew – or representatives of every department, at least – sit and go through the script again, but this time every question is answered, and every issue is raised, all to try to ensure that the shoot will run as smoothly as possible. It's a humbling and daunting feeling being sat in the middle. For the first time, I love every minute of it.

Afterwards, Phil takes me for a quiet drink to talk through everything. It's all coming together. I genuinely can't wait to get going. I must be mad.

14 FEBRUARY

It's the week before we start shooting. The cast arrives in Cardiff for a read-through, followed by a rehearsal. This is such a treat. Too often, the first time that you'll meet an actor is on set, and you're straight into the work. Don't get me wrong, you can't do enormous amounts in a few hours, but any time with the cast in a room just talking through the script and the story can really help the end result. I tend to leave the script alone, and ask the actors to tell me who they think their character is? What do they like? We invent history and background, as well as exploring the relationships between the characters so when they arrive on set, hopefully they'll have some concrete character notes in their minds. This will enable them to launch straight into our story, as sadly on the day there will be no time to stop and ponder their 'motivation'.

We gather early in the morning for the read-through. I nervously drink too much tea and need the loo constantly. It's amazing the transformation that occurs when a script is read aloud. All the emotion and excitement of the page suddenly fills the room. It is so intoxicating, and, despite my dodgy reading of Zack (as Shaun couldn't make it), the read-through goes really well, and everyone is looking forward to the shoot... regardless of the rather ominous weather reports, which warn of a major snow-front heading straight for us the day we start shooting! Also, it's my first chance to chat with Billie and David, who talk enthusiastically of the story as the scariest they've done!

As Billie and David head back to set, Russell, Phil, Julie and I sit and go through notes. The main one seems to be that the tone of the read-through was quite light and jovial, and we have to ensure the dark and real tone that we're after is there, and the pace is kept up. If we get it right, the episodes will be like a rollercoaster.

On the way home, I'm called by Lowri: she has found another possible location for the Bore Room. Not being overly pleased with the current choice, we head off to check it out, and thank the Lord – it's utterly perfect! A disused chemical plant with two different levels and adjoining platforms. It's so what we've been looking for, and here it is at the eleventh hour. It's a bit further than we'd like to travel, ideally, but we arrange to bring everyone here on the recce in a couple of day's time. This is it. Everything is in place. *Doctor Who*, Series Two, Episodes 8 and 9, here we go...

To be continued...

JAC
RICHARD
PETER
CLAY

Bull's blood is King Zargo's libation
Romana keeps saying 'striation'
Yes it's *Warriors' Gate*
And – at last! – three years late
Here comes Terrance's *Vampire Mutation*!

THE TIME TEAM

Four fans. 723 episodes. No escape!

CLICHÉ COUNTER

DEATHS ON SCREEN SO FAR

00837

ONE OR MORE REGULARS RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS

00164

ONE OR MORE REGULARS INCARCERATED

00218

THE TIME TEAM GATHER IN RICHARD'S front room. When we last left them, they had perked up considerably after *Meglos*, and were – at least in comparison – singing the praises of *Full Circle*. When they last left the Doctor, Romana and K9 they were adrift in something called E-space, which is like any old space, except smaller and a lovely shade of green.

The title of their next assignment elicits a sigh from Clay. "*State of Decay*. Sounds absolutely bloody gripping. What's it gonna be about, dentists?"

"And what would be wrong with that?" sniffs Peter-the-dentist, before his attention is distracted by the story itself, where three royals in a medieval tower are giving guards orders to rough up the peasants. "Blimey, the villains look marvellous!"

"I'm not too sure about King Zargo and Queen Camilla, but Emrys James has a simply wonderful voice and gives Aukon real presence," notes Richard.

Peter's keen. "Good, old fashioned *Doctor Who* baddies, and a band of peasant rebels for the Doctor to side with. This is what we want. Trust Terrance Dicks to deliver!"

"It's the most traditional episode opening for about five years," notes Jac. "That's a relief after the slowness and weirdness of the last few stories."

In the TARDIS, lucky K9 has found the planet. Peter's alarmed. "There's only one other planet in the whole of E-space? But that means that the Doctor has condemned the Starliner crew from *Full Circle* to be lost in space forever!"

He doesn't have time to worry about the Deciders for very long, though, as after the Doctor and Romana set off to explore the medieval village, an inner door opens and in walks a stowaway – Adric. "Oh dear God," says Richard. "Adric is a companion. Judging by the quality of his acting in this scene, it's going to be a rough ride."

"He is a very curious creature," muses Clay. "Look at the way he walks across the control room like a six-year-old in a school play. Of all the actors in the country, they've cast *him* as a new regular. Doesn't inspire any more confidence in the new production team."

"He may turn out great," says Peter. "Though it's very odd having an annoying brat on the TARDIS. Makes the series seem more childish in a way that K9 somehow doesn't."

Jac ponders. "He's got a cute nose. I like him, it makes a nice change to have a male companion again."

The Doctor and Romana meet the rebels, and find out they're sitting on a 'technocothaka' of old space junk. "This is turning out to be by far the best story of this season," says Clay. "It's simple and direct in a good way, and the menace is being set up well."

"And the rebels have got Ceefax on their computers," adds Peter. "I had a BBC 'B' home computer that could do those graphics back when I were a lad..."

Everyone claps when the sinister Aukon promises to find the 'outsiders' with his servants of the night. "The idea of superimposing the bat footage over him is absolutely inspired," says Richard. "Director Peter Moffatt is a name to watch."

"A simple idea resulting in a stunning effect," agrees Peter.

The episode ends with the Doctor and Romana attacked by an army of bats. "The bats on strings are a bit lame," comments Jac. "But the closing shot of a swarm of bats against the green night sky is wonderful."

"We've never really had a vampire story before," notes Clay. "It was about time."

Part Two sees the bats 'escort' the Doctor and Romana to the Tower, where they enjoy a rather sinister buffet reception from the Three Who Rule. "This is lovely," says Clay. "Look at the bit where Romana cuts her finger. It's a Hammer Horror cliché, with Camilla licking her lips and saying 'Let me see' in real Ingrid Pitt fashion, but it's all being done with such conviction. Even the cheap synthy music sounds more effective."

"Tom's in his element in the gothic environment," reckons Peter. "Almost back to his old self. Though his hair is looking remarkably thin and flat."

Back at the village, Adric is 'selected' by Aukon and rushed back to the Tower, where Camilla stares lustfully at him. Her line 'Such a handsome child' is greeted with hoots of derision from the Team. "Wind that back!" demands Peter. "He looks about 12!" screams Richard.

"Terrance obviously wrote that before he'd seen Adric," smirks Jac. "Oh dear."

The Doctor and Romana have clambered down the Tower and discovered it's actually a spaceship. "Hmm," notes Richard. "Have you noticed this is the second story in a row where we've have a civilization living in an archaic and apparently unflyable spaceship for millennia?"

"Yes," says Jac. "It's a bit unfortunate."

Part Two climaxes with Aukon confronting our heroes in a cave at the bottom of the Tower, where peasants' bodies are drained of blood and there's a very loud heartbeat. "At last, some proper scares," says Clay. "Though the cliffhanger is a bit 'so what?' Let's have some full-on vampirism!"

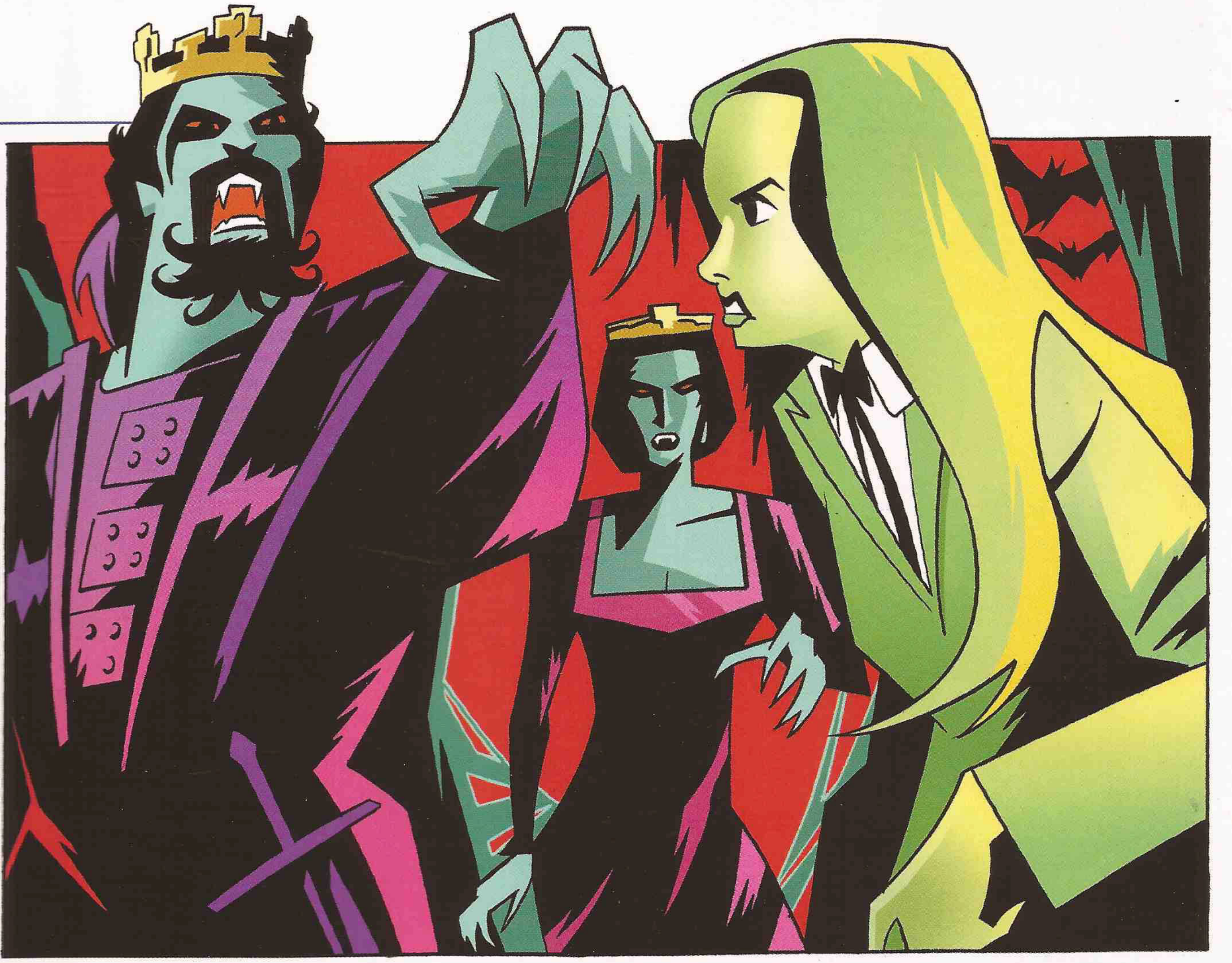
AS WE MOVE INTO PART THREE, RICHARD has more to say on Aukon. "It's interesting to see just how melodramatic Emrys James is as Aukon, and yet he pulls the character off with such style. Just compare that to the performance Graham Crowden gave in *The Horns of Nimon* just a few stories ago."

"Oh, but I miss the occasional OTT character," says Peter. "Since the Doctor's calmed down, I'd welcome a bonkers villain to spice things up a bit. And I can't help thinking that for the big *Doctor Who* vampire story, this isn't really delivering. Where's the blood?"

The Doctor and Romana share a special moment in a cell, and Clay's impressed. "This is a great scene; the Doctor and Romana having fun while working out the back story of the vampires and their fight with the ancient Time Lords. Then he tops it by telling her she's wonderful. Suddenly the series feels a bit warmer again."

"Ancient Time Lord history, mention of Rassilon and even a reference to the Old Hermit of the Pertwee years," observes Peter. "It certainly ups the stakes, makes you feel the story is significant even though there's been a lot of talking and not enough biting."

But Jac's not impressed. "Tom and Lalla play it well, but the back references feel very odd and out of place. It makes you wonder if Terrance has watched the show since the



EPISODES 538 TO 545

Pertwee era."

Romana and rebel Tarak – "that's Thane Bettany, father of Paul Bettany from *The Da Vinci Code,"* observes Richard helpfully – mount a raid on the royal bedchamber to rescue Adric.

Clayton jumps as the eyes of the sleeping vampires open. "Coo! I like them sleeping on what looks like a tomb. I love Zargo and Camilla, but now let's see them *do* something."

> "I love Zargo and Camilla – all that swooping choreography and sleeping on tombs – but it's so rare we actually get to see them *do* anything..." **CLAY**

He's not happy with what they do. "It's all there in the script – Tarak is gored, and Zargo pulls Adric's knife out of his body – but it's done very mimsily in practice. Still, you gotta love Camilla. 'The blood of the dead is stale and flat!'"

Into Part Four, and the vampires are preparing to use Adric to wake their giant master. Somehow. "Romana's got the right attitude to Adric," notes Clay. "She obviously hates the little geek."

"I'm not sure if we're meant to think he's pretending to be on the vampires' side or really wants to be one," says Peter.

"Camilla and Zargo must have been watching far too many vampire movies before they left Earth," notes Jac. "All that swooping choreography, not to mention making Romana wear a sacrificial frock just for the hell of it."

Luckily, the Doctor is on hand with K9, a bunch of revolting peasants, and a handy solution gleaned from the TARDIS history files. He nips up to the top of the Tower, and fires off a scoutship that comes back down to pierce the Great Vampire in the heart before anything more than his hand can arise.

"What a cheat!" groans Clay. "All the way through, we've been promised the Great Vampire. And we never saw him!"

Richard's not happy either. "I was under the impression the Great Vampire was breaking through in an underground cavern, but the scoutship buries itself in the ground, which seems to suggest this is all taking place outside. Either way, the massive scoutship seems a bit out of proportion with the supposed size of the vampire."

Zargo, Camilla and Aukon advance on the Doctor – and crumble to dust. "Their deaths are brilliantly realised," says Peter. "Even the sound effects are good. Camilla makes a horrible squeaking noise. Nearly makes up for the rubbish Great Vampire and Rocket effects."

As the TARDIS crew head off for pastures new, the Team sum up. "That story was refreshingly easy to follow," says Peter. "I want more like that."

"It seemed to go on for ever," says Jac. "So much talking."

"Moments of greatness, and tons better than anything else in this season so far," says Clay, "but the 'Doctor-meets-vampires' story should have been epic, scary and unforgettable. And it just wasn't."

A CURIOUS THING HAPPENS AS THE TEAM watch part one of *Warriors' Gate*, the everyday story of a crashed spaceship in the middle of nowhere. Normally I have a job collecting their myriad observations, but looking round their faces I see a level of intense concentration – dare I say fascination – that is most unusual.

"For quite some time, the stories have been rather straightforward in their nature," notes Richard as we join the ramshackle crew of the ramshackle ship led by Captain Rorvik. "This is immediately very different, and it feels very confident and grown up."

It seems Rorvik's having trouble with his slave navigator,a lion-like Tharil called Biroc. "It's Barry Gibb," observes Clayton. Then comedy workmen Aldo and Royce toss a coin, everything goes slo-mo, and we see an outline of the TARDIS on a screen.

Everyone's bemused. "I like this," says Clay. "The lazy-arse crew and their rubbish ship feel so much more real than the blithering peasants or technocrats of the last few stories. So even though the story is very strange – almost incomprehensible – you're drawn into it."

Peter agrees. "I've no idea what's going on – again – but it looks stunning. Evolution in TV production has allowed the director to use hand held cameras and impressive effects in a way that we've not seen before. I love the design of the ship."

In the TARDIS, the Doctor and Romana are having a row about I Ching or Jung ▶

Compiled by
MICHAEL PRITCHARD

Illustration by
ADRIAN SALMON

◀ or something – "that is just bizarre," notes Jac "but strangely watchable" – when Adric tosses a coin, the doors open, K9 blows up, and in comes Biroc. To warn about something. Then he goes. The Doctor follows – and there's nothing outside. Nothing at all...

"This is great!" says Clay. "Utterly blitheringly confusing but unlike *The Leisure Hive*, say, it feels like it's meant to be."

Turns out there is something in the void after all – a ruined gateway with a mirror guarded by dusty robot suits of armour – the Gundan – one of which wakes up and lunges for the Doctor with its chopper. "They're very flimsy," notes Richard. "But I don't care. This is shaping up to be a very mystical, magical story. Really unusual. I'm gripped."

Part Two sees the Doctor talking to the Gundan about ancient arches, Romana doing a bizarre exotic dance routine with Rorvik and being strapped in a chair, and Adric wandering about with no lines. Everyone's rapt. Richard notes, "The model work is rather a disappointment. They've worked so hard to put people in this strange white void and yet the models let the illusion down, casting unnecessary shadows on a backcloth that's just too close."

"Doesn't bother me, really," puts in Peter. "For all the mystical weirdness, the level of brutality – notably the treatment of Romana and the Tharils – is a real throwback to the Hinchcliffe era. Odd, odd, odd, but wonderful."

"It's a *very* odd story," adds Jac. "There's a lot of off-screen background – the Gundan's exposition points to that – and combined with occasionally confusing visuals it's quite disconcerting. It's obviously intended to be strange and stylised, but I'm not sure it's meant to be quite as confusing as it is. I like it, but do you think any children were still watching by this point?"

To answer, Richard just points to Clayton, sitting forward, intensely fascinated and fascinatedly intense, while stuffing Wotsits into his gob.

AND THE FASCINATION GETS EVEN MORE fascinating as the Doctor steps through the mirror into Part Three – and a land of black-and-white photographs. "This is rather well done," says Richard. Really otherworldly. Is that a word?"

> "This is shaping up to be a very mystical, magical sort of story. Very unusual. I'm totally gripped." **RICHARD**

"I'm lovin' it," says Peter. "More like an early 1980s pop video than *Doctor Who*, but why not?"

Finally Biroc leads the Doctor to the gateway – at some earlier point in time where the Tharils were masters and humans the slaves. "I love the idea of the two time zones set around the banqueting table and jumping between the two," says Richard. "There's something unnerving about the way it's done. And the brief shot we get of the Gundan speedily breaking into the hall is rather exciting. It's a pity we didn't see more of them being like this."

Then Romana and her new Tharil friend step into the land of photos. Adric's still wandering about somewhere, K9's going round in circles blabbering about 'a mass conversion anomaly'. "What? Where? How? Why? Totally surreal," says Peter.

"I've no idea what this story is about," observes Jac. "Is it about the Tharils? They're a bit background-y. Or about trying to escape from a collapsing nowhere? Or, er, what?"

Clayton shovels another Wotsit in. "Ssh," he says, missing the entire point of the Time Team.

Explanations of a sort are forthcoming in part four. Turns out Rorvik's ship is so heavy it's causing the void to collapse. His reaction is to try to revive another Tharil navigator from his slave store and blast his way out.

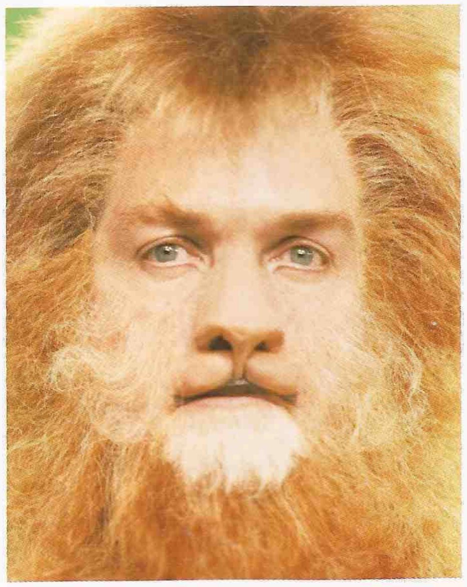
Crewmember Sagan goes to unpack a Tharil – and ends up being electrocuted by one. Jac frowns. "Sagan's death is a really nasty moment. I'm not saying he didn't deserve some comeuppance, but to show such a graphically painful death was a bit not-for-children."

Adric's rescued the Doctor and Romana – "the only thing he's done in the entire story, for which we can be truly grateful," says Richard – and they head off to stop Rorvik's plan because, as Romana says, "'the backblast backlash will bounce back and destroy everything!" They almost succeed, but then Biroc turns up and tells them not to bother. The ship blows up. The Tharils walk out from the wreck like ghosts. And, er, that's about it.

"So the Doctor and Romana didn't need to do anything," gapes Clayton. "It all just... *happened* and somehow the Tharil slaves escaped. That's crazy, but this is a crazy story!"

"Hang on, what, the story's over?! Did it all get resolved, then? How out of the blue was that?!" splutters Jac. "We didn't even see Rorvik dying."

And then – Romana grabs K9 and tells the Doctor she's staying with Biroc. "A real nothing of an exit," sighs Richard. "With absolutely no warning she just decides to go off and leave the Doctor. To be honest, I've not really warmed to Lalla Ward's portrayal, so I'm not really sorry to see her go. And what a bonus. K9 has gone too!"



Clayton's not happy. "There *was* a build-up," he says, "but no pay-off. After those lovely scenes in the last two stories hinting at her departure she just goes. I'll miss her and K9. Especially as their replacement is a very, very bad child actor."

"I loved Lalla's Romana too," says Peter. "But it seems very out of character for her to jump ship like that. She must really hate Gallifrey."

Jac sniffs. "We obviously missed her off-screen discussions with the Tharils about how they need a Time Lord, a fact we're suddenly presented with. A really bad exit. Worst since Dodo. And I loved this Romana, and K9 too, so I'm going to miss them."

And so the Doctor's blown out of E-space – "Whatever it was, and whyever we were supposed to care," grumbles Clay. "I loved *Warriors' Gate*, though, until Romana's exit. It's hard to think what's going to happen next, as the Doctor doesn't seem to have any kind of relationship with or attitude towards Adric. But this new style seems to have settled down a bit now, so here's hoping they'll pull something amazing out of the bag..." DWM

AND YOU SAID

STATE OF DECAY

"It's worth remembering that back in 1980, it wasn't immediately obvious that vampires could turn up in *Doctor Who*. The show had been so relentlessly science fantasy for so long a time that the idea that something more pure horror could be brought in seemed to violate the rules. And that surprise really helps."

STEVEN MANFRED WISCONSIN, USA

"It is mental that a civilisation capable of developing a time machine would ever need to enter data into that machine via a magnetic card system! "

STEPHEN MARTIN, HINCKLEY

"It's not remotely original, the characters are clichés, the horror lacks punch – but the mix of modern and ancient folklore in pitting Time Lords against vampires just *works*. It's not much cop as a story, but great as a myth."

ALEX WILCOCK, ISLE OF DOGS

"So, er... what *is* the wasting?!"

JAMES BEAMISH, EMAIL

WARRIORS' GATE

"It's so sweet when K9 calls Adric 'Young master'! This is a promising relationship that Adric is never given the chance to develop – and it's not the last time this will happen..."

ROBERT KEELEY, E-MAIL

"Romana whacking Rorvik with a clipboard? It's worth paying the license fee for that alone!"

Z. JAI WALSH, ACTON

"Probably the finest story of a sombre, unwatched season, when so much seemed to go wrong for the programme. A beautifully constructed piece of television with some stunning visuals and a marvellous central performance from Clifford Rose; this really is an example of *Doctor Who* at its finest."

ALAN SHERIDAN, E-MAIL

In a special Time Team in **DWM** 373 (we expect), the gang will be summing up the Tom Baker era, and meeting an old friend or two in *K9 & Company*. Send your thoughts on these vital matters to the usual address (see p10), or email us at *dwm@panini.co.uk* marked 'Time Team' in the subject line. Closing date is 20 July 2006.

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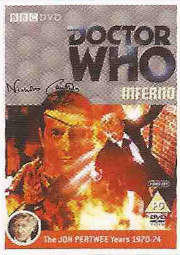
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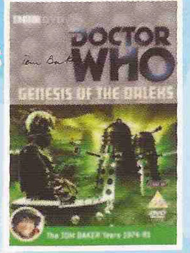
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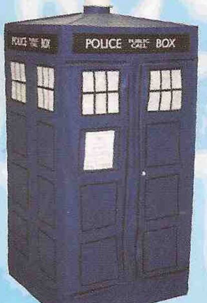
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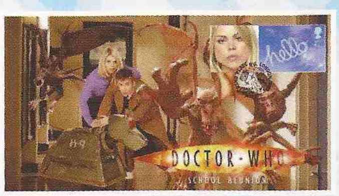
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Never can say goodbye

Episode 3: SCHOOL REUNION

Written by TOBY WHITHOUSE | Directed by JAMES HAWES | Broadcast Saturday 29 April 2005

▲ *Top: The Doctor is thrilled to meet a familiar face in the staffroom.*

▲ *K9 Mk IV – or is it Mk III rebuilt? Don't write in...*

SCHOOL REUNIONS ARE A GOOD opportunity to dip back into the past, to re-meet old friends, find out what they've been doing with their lives, and to wildly exaggerate your own achievements to impress people you've not thought about for years. In this case, though, the school's been invaded by aliens who've enslaved the children, eaten the teachers and garnished the chips with brain sauce.

Toby Whithouse's script has loads of scary moments, beginning with the teaser, and continuing with Kenny's encounter with a Krillitane in the darkened computer room, and the realisation that 'they're doing something to the children'. Scariest of all, though, is this Doctor when he's angry. We learn a lot about the new Doctor here – he used to have so much mercy, but now he's got no time for second chances. The Doctor has always been the Peter Pan to his companion's Wendy, but in the past he's only occasionally dwelled on his unnatural longevity compared to the fleeting lives of his fellow travellers. *School Reunion* presents us with a Doctor who, despite the company of Sarah or Rose, is very lonely. David Tennant switches brilliantly from cheerful motor-mouth to a man still haunted by what happened during the Time War, and hideously tempted by Finch's offer to change the past. It's only when Sarah reminds him that everything has its time – just what he said to Cassandra on Platform One – that the Doctor realises that he doesn't want that kind of power.

> "Elisabeth Sladen slips effortlessly back into character, right down to the lip-biting mannerisms and shallow-breathed delivery."

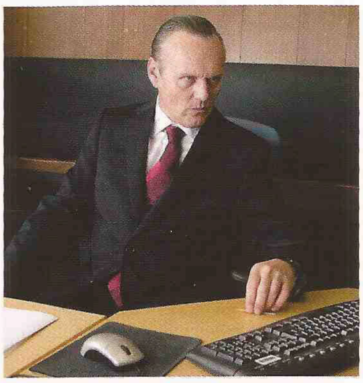
Given the Doctor's fear of the human ageing process it's lucky that Sarah hasn't become some wizened old hag since he last met her. It's hard to believe that she last walked out of the TARDIS 30 years ago, because Elisabeth Sladen slips effortlessly back into the character, right down to the lip-biting mannerisms and shallow-breathed delivery, plus supremely effective non-verbal acting. The moment she first sees the TARDIS is magical, and the final scenes mix heartbreak with hope. Several different emotions run across Sarah's face as she watches the TARDIS fade away only to reveal the spruced-up K9 Mark IV – a fair exchange for the rusty, clapped-out version. These cute cameos by John Leeson remind us that K9 can be immense fun, rather than just a plot convenience.

Billie Piper gets a bit less to do than previously but still has plenty of great moments, from the priceless look she gives the Doctor as she serves his dinner, to her claws-out feud with Sarah. In any case, the story is as much about Rose getting a glimpse of the future that might be waiting

▲ *Rose gets serving up in Deffry Vale's school canteen.*

for her as it is about Sarah's reunion with the Doctor. Rose's relationship with him gets its first serious jolt as she realises, whatever he might say, that she might just be another in a long line of 'assistants' rather than that special someone. Given that the Doctor takes Mickey onboard despite Rose's reluctance – and it seems only fair given that he's helped save Earth yet again – there could be trouble ahead in the TARDIS.

Since the Krillitane invasion plot was only the hook to reunite Sarah and the Doctor, there was a danger that the monsters could have been fairly generic and forgettable. It was therefore a stroke of genius to cast Anthony Head as the aliens' spokesman. No stranger to classroom-based horror, Head imbues Mr Finch's lines with menace and just the right degree of melodrama – a worthy adversary for this dangerous Doctor. Directing them as two rivals in a Western, James Hawes makes the confrontations between the Doctor and Finch memorable, tense and intriguing, while Whithouse adds a neat twist to their relationship by having Finch devilishly tempting the Doctor to break the laws of the universe, playing on his loneliness and 'so many goodbyes' to get under his skin.



◀ *Mr Finch (Anthony Head)*

It also helps that the special effects are especially effective. The Krillitanes are fantastic. A bit more cartoonish than *Tooth and Claw*'s werewolf, they are immensely spooky as they chase characters around the school, or lurk in darkened classrooms. It's only the scene of Finch and a minion standing on a roof observing the Doctor repair K9 that doesn't come off as well as it might have.

Elegiac, not just for Sarah and K9 but for old *Doctor Who* (Sarah's last line is almost the same as the Seventh Doctor's in *Survival*, *Doctor Who*'s 'original' final episode in 1989), *School Reunion* reminds us that the past should never be forgotten. Ultimately, though, it comes down firmly against nostalgia: the Doctor won't go back and change his past, and Sarah won't go back to her old life of time-travel. In the end both Sarah and the Doctor leave with a reaffirmed belief in what they are doing now, and with new companions with whom to share future adventures. Like all the best school reunions, we've had a great time catching up with people we've not seen for years, but walk away more than happy with what we've got.

MATT MICHAEL

▲ *A Krillitane is shot by a shooty-dog-thing.*

French kissing

Episode 4: THE GIRL IN THE FIREPLACE

Written by STEVEN MOFFAT | Directed by EUROS LYN | Broadcast Saturday 6 May 2005

SOME DOCTOR WHO STORIES ARE LIKE Saturday morning adventure serials. Others, like *Tooth and Claw*, are horror films or comic strips. Writer Steven Moffat makes *The Girl in the Fireplace* a finely-crafted short story, one that focuses on character and creating mood rather than trying to cram in the events of a movie.

That's not to say that the episode lacks spectacle. Apart from setting the story in the sumptuous surroundings of eighteenth-century France and having the Doctor dramatically riding a horse through a mirror to rescue the girl, Moffat knows that *Doctor Who*'s icons are its monsters, and the clockwork robots are a creepy addition to the list. What could be scarier than a monster hiding under your bed? Try a monster with a leering mask for a face, ticking like the hungry crocodile from *Peter Pan* and standing right behind you. The clockwork robots are a fabulous design, both in their bewigged splendour and when their parts are showing. This is complemented by their jerky movements as they stalk the corridors of the spaceship or the Palace of Versailles, and their odd, answer-phone voices.

There are also some imaginative uses of special effects to create the kind of visuals that could never have been achieved in the past. The horse leaping through the mirror is as arresting an image as the show's ever had, but elsewhere the CGI helps bring the script to life, allowing the camera to pull out from Rose's face at the window of the ship back into the depths of space, or revealing the ship's name – and the robots' motivation – in a beautiful visual twist.

◀ *It's only 1758 – still over 30 years 'til the Revolution – but Madame de Pompadour (Sophia Myles) is already in danger of losing her head...*

Moffat's witty script glosses over the improbability of the Doctor picking just the right time windows to experience Madame de Pompadour's life in chronological order, and he gets away with a lengthy exposition scene by keeping the jokes coming. He plays with bizarre and striking juxtapositions such as the horse in the corridor, or Pompadour walking from a lush palace into a grotty spaceship. It's an approach that's enhanced by Euros Lyn's fine direction, which goes for graceful, sweeping camerawork in the French segments, and tighter shots in the spaceship scenes. Most ambitiously for a series that's generally preferred horror to straight sci-fi, Moffat presents a genuine scientific romance. This is the kind of thing *Star Trek* used to

▲ *Reinette and her 'fireplace man'.*

► *A clockwork robot gets its books into Rose...*

▼ *Arthur: a good name for a horse, don't you think?*

attempt, although casting the Doctor in the mould of intergalactic Casanova Captain Kirk is likely to raise a few eyebrows among those who prefer their Time Lords celibate. In his digital commentary on the episode, Moffat's keen to play up that this is the Doctor who discovers girls. That's a bit disingenuous, though, given that at the beginning of the Doctor's adventures he got engaged to an Aztec lady, not to mention that he travelled around with his granddaughter. If anything, *The Girl in the Fireplace* merely confirms a rarely-spoken truth: the Doctor needs to be loved, just like everybody else does.

That said, he seems to rather quickly fall head over heels for Madame de Pompadour, the possessor of a perceptive brain and a fine decolletage. He excitedly tells Rose and Mickey that she was one of the most accomplished figures in French history, but we pretty much have to take his word for it because we don't see much evidence. Given that the episode is not actually about French politics, it's not really a problem, although it does leave the audience wondering whether the Doctor falls in love with the woman or the reputation that precedes her.

> "Immortality really is a curse, and the Doctor is always destined to watch the people he loves walk the slow path..."

Poor Rose – sidetracked in favour of Sarah Jane, saddled with Mickey and now snubbed for Madame de Pompadour, she's really seeing another side to the Doctor. She does at least get in a catty put down as the Doctor staggers in, apparently drunk, from a party. As for Mickey, he's less use than the horse this week. Noel Clarke plays Mickey's excitement at his 'first go' well, and gets a couple of nice lines (particularly his incredulous 'even French?' about the TARDIS' translations), but both he and Billie Piper take a back seat to showcase David Tennant's superb performance. His hyperactive, angry, ever-so-clever Doctor switching from drunk acting to down-to-business problem solving contrasts with Sophia Myles' preternaturally controlled and focused Pompadour, an oil painting in the sense that she is still and poised, even when about to be beheaded.

Less obviously brilliant than *The Empty Child*, *The Girl in the Fireplace* is a beautiful piece of television, albeit one that's likely to divide fans of the series between those who adore its chutzpah and those who can appreciate the script but feel that showing the Doctor lusting after a blonde diminishes him to the level of a normal bloke. The episode's sequencing straight after *School Reunion* makes it a companion piece, brutally paying off the Doctor's get-out-of-jail claim in the earlier story that he can't stay with any one human because we age and die. Immortality really is a curse, and the Doctor is always destined to watch the people he loves walk a slow path that he can never follow. This unique *Doctor Who* story thus concludes with perhaps the bleakest ending the show's ever attempted, followed by its smartest punchline.

MATT MICHAEL DWM

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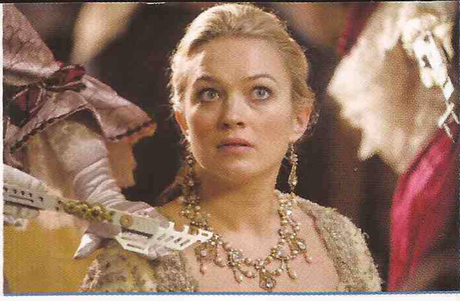


Well devious! It's the...

MATRIX DATA BANK

– Oi, Professor! What is this dump?

– Quiet, Ace.

– Boredom City! Just a load of bits of paper.

– I think they're questions, Ace.

– I hate questions, Professor. They were always asking questions. Teachers, social workers, probation officers, my mum... 'Where've you been?', 'Who was that you were with?', 'Where are you going with that gelignite?'...

– But these... these are very special questions, Ace. This is the Matrrrrix Data Bank.

– I've got a thing about banks, Professor. All that putting money in, drawing money out... bank managers, cheque books... they're well naff...

– It's not that sort of bank, Ace. And the pain will pass, believe me. Read the first question.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

– Right. It's from **TOM HUMPHRIES** via email, who asks '*In* The Girl in the Fireplace, *it's revealed that the young Madame de Pompadour is speaking French translated into English by the TARDIS. But she's still saying "Monsieur." Surely, the TARDIS would translate it as "Sir" or even "Mister?"*' He's got a good point, Professor.

– Ah. Well, what the viewers have to rrrrrememberrrr, Ace, is that the TARDIS doesn't literally translate every word into English. It merely enables every traveller to understand what people are saying. So to you or Rose or Mickey, you *think* you're hearing English. But in fact, you're simply understanding what the people we meet on our travels, like Madame de Pompadour, are saying in their own tongue.

– Gordon Bennett, Professor, that's well wicked! But then why did Rose and Mickey and the viewers hear Reinette say 'Monsieur'?

– Because the TARDIS knew it would make sense to them – so it left the word alone.

– Ace! But I hope we never go to France, Professor.

– Why, Ace?

– Went on a school trip. It rained all week. Well boring.

– Next question, Ace.

– But why are we here, Professor? What's going on? You know, don't you, you always know! What are you hiding from me?

– All in good time, Ace. All in good time...

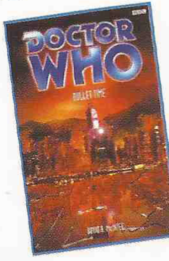
SARAH JANE'S MYTH

– **DANIEL HUGHES** writes, '*In* School Reunion, *the Doctor claimed he'd regenerated "half a dozen times" since he last met Sarah Jane, yet she met the Fifth Doctor in* The Five Doctors, *and the Seventh Doctor twice – in the BBC novel* Bullet Time *and the* **DWM** *comic strip* Train-Flight. *Does this mean those two events never happened or haven't happened yet for Sarah? Or did she simply just never get round to asking the Doctor why he left her when they met in* The Five Doctors, *the novel and the comic strip?*'

– Well, Ace, Sarah did appear in *The Five Doctors*, but for much of the time she was only with the Third Doctor – so there'd be little point asking him to explain something that hadn't happened to him yet. And yes, she did meet the First, Second and Fifth Doctors too, but as I rrrrecall, events were rather pressing at the time.

– Okay, Professor, but what about *Bullet Time* and *Train-Flight*?

– That's harder to answer, Ace. Bear in mind that this universe isn't the only one – there are parallels out there, places that are sideways in time. Perhaps *Bullet Time* and *Train-Flight* took place in one of those? It's all rrrelative.

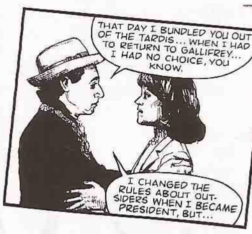


– Don't give me brain ache, Professor. Do you mean there are parallel universes with different adventures in them?

– Who knows, Ace? After the TV series ended in 1989, you yourself have had three divergent destinies in different BBC approved spin-offs.

– So what happens to me?

– Well, you either become an eighteenth-century French noblewoman on a time-travelling motorbike in the Virgin novels, get killed by the Threshold in the **DWM** strip or live on as 'McShane' to join me and Hex on our audio travels with Big Finish. It's all a matter of possibilities.


THAT DAY I BUNDLED YOU OUT OF THE TARDIS... WHEN I HAD TO RETURN TO GALLIFREY... I HAD NO CHOICE, YOU KNOW.
I CHANGED THE RULES ABOUT OUT-SIDERS WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT, BUT...

– Well boggling, Professor! But you're still holding something back about this Matrix Data Bank. Why can't you tell me?!

– Patience, Ace!

THE WHICH BLAIR PROJECT

– **KETAN PATEL** of Ealing's got a question, Professor. '*In* Rise of the Cybermen, *Mickey mentions Tony Blair 'got elected' as Prime Minister. Does that mean Tony Blair is the Prime Minister killed by the Slitheen in* Aliens of London, *allowing Harriet Jones to take over for* The Christmas Invasion?'

– Well, Ace, the implication is there. But viewers at home should remember that the *Doctor Who* universe is very visibly not theirs. So yes, Tony Blair could well be the PM killed by the Slitheen – and certainly, it seems likely that the 'dodgy dossier' and the Iraq war or something very similar has happened there – but in that same story, the UK has handed authorisation for the launch of its nuclear missiles to the UN, which is very unlikely in the viewers' universe. So who's to say Tony Blair is a Labour PM in the *Doctor Who* universe? And if that is him in *Aliens of London*, he doesn't really look like the viewers' Tony Blair.

– It's like in *The Green Death*, Professor, when the Brigadier phones the Prime Minister and he's called 'Jeremy', like the leader of the Liberals when it was shown.

– Exactly, Ace. That's my girl!

THE RETURN OF SORVAD

– What's that walking in, Professor?

– *I'm walking on sunshine, woo-hooh, walking on sunshine...*

– The proprietor of the Matrix Data Bank. Sorvad!

– *Gasp! Doctor Who and Ace! What're you doing here?*

– You've been on holiday, I see, Sorvad. All that lovely weather. Walking along sun-kissed shores, stretching out your long legs in the deep blue water, sipping coconut milk through a straw in your grating... you're a busy man, Sorvad, don't you think you deserve more of a break?

– *You're right, Doctor, I'm going back on holiday. Bye!*

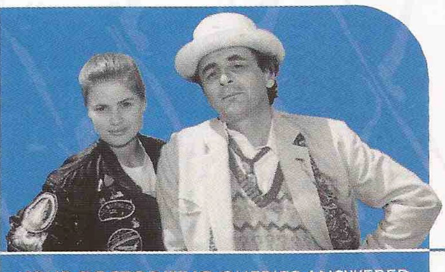
– You talked Sorvad into going back on holiday, Professor!

– Did I, Ace?

– Wicked! You set up the whole thing! You knew from the very beginning! It was your Matrix Data Bank all along, wasn't it?

– Just for today, Ace. Next time it'll belong to somebody else... Yes, somewhere out there, there's another script where I behave appallingly to you and then you forgive me. Somewhere there's baffling dialogue, somewhere a plot doesn't make the slightest sense; and somewhere else the incidental music sounds like the B-side of *I'd Rather Jack* by the Rrreynolds Girrrrrls. Come on, Ace. We've got work to do...

Sorvad is away. Again.



YOUR **DOCTOR WHO** QUERIES ANSWERED BY **THE SEVENTH DOCTOR AND ACE**

OFF THE SHELF AWARDS RESULTS

As well as seeing the return of *Doctor Who* to television, 2005 also saw dozens of new adventures for the Doctor in books, audios, and comic strips – as well as a number of classic adventures on DVD, a new range of Doctor Who toys, and trusty old **DWM**! So what were your favourites? Let's find out...

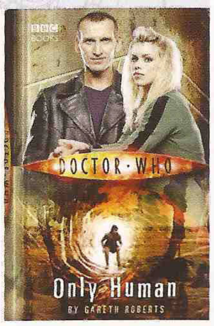
Results: Tom Spilsbury

NINTH DOCTOR PUBLICATIONS

Rank	Title	Average/10
1	**Only Human** by Gareth Roberts	8.18
2	**The Doctor Who Annual 2006** Edited by Clayton Hickman	8.11
3	**The Stealers of Dreams** by Steve Lyons	7.67
4	**The Deviant Strain** by Justin Richards	7.37
5	**The Clockwise Man** by Justin Richards	7.33
6	**Winner Takes All** by Jacqueline Rayner	7.00
7	**The Monsters Inside** by Stephen Cole	6.83

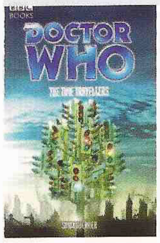
"That's really great news. I know *Doctor Who* fans have a bit of a downer on cave people, so I'm happy I was able to shine a little light on pre-history without sending everybody to sleep. Justin Richards, Helen Raynor and Simon Winstone all had a great hand in it, so thanks to them, and also to the brilliant cognitive scientist Steven Pinker, whose ideas I ripped off without anybody noticing."

GARETH ROBERTS
Writer, *Only Human*



OTHER DOCTOR WHO FICTION

Rank	Title	Average/10
1	**The Time Travellers** by Simon Guerrier	8.06
2	**The Gallifrey Chronicles** by Lance Parkin	7.73
3	**Fear Itself** by Nick Wallace	7.63
4	**Short Trips: A History of Christmas** Edited by Simon Guerrier	7.61
5	**World Game** by Terrance Dicks	7.30
6	**Short Trips: A Day in the Life** Edited by Ian Farrington	7.08
7	**Atom Bomb Blues** By Andrew Cartmel	6.85
8	**Short Trips: Solar System** Edited by Gary Russell	6.83
9	**Spiral Scratch** By Gary Russell	6.60
10	**Short Trips: Seven Deadly Sins** Edited by David Bailey	6.43
11	**To the Slaughter** By Stephen Cole	6.40
12	**Island of Death** By Barry Letts	6.15
13	**Match of the Day** By Chris Boucher	6.03

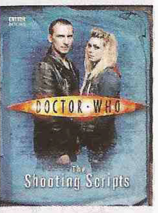


"Holy cow! Are you quite sure this is right? Nick Wallace's *Fear Itself* is much better than mine. Thanks to everyone who voted for me, and especially to Justin, Jac and Vicki at BBC Books who were so kind and supportive. They can have the legs and arms off my statuette. I *do* get a statuette, don't I?"

SIMON GUERRIER
Writer *The Time Travellers*

OTHER DOCTOR WHO BOOKS

Rank	Title	% vote
1	**Shooting Scripts** By Russell T Davies *et al*	23.6%
2	**Monsters and Villains** by Justin Richards	17.2%
3	**Back to the Vortex** by J Shaun Lyon	13.9%
4	**The Legend Continues** by Justin Richards	11.3%
5	**The About Time series** by Miles and Wood	6.9%
6	**Script Doctor** by Andrew Cartmel	6.4%
7	**Who's Next** by Clapham, Robson and Smith	3.8%
8	**The Audio Scripts 4** Edited by Ian Farrington	3.3%
	Others	**13.6%**



DOCTOR WHO AUDIO DRAMAS

Rank	Title	Average/10
1	**Terror Firma** by Joseph Lidster	8.04
2	**Other Lives** by Gary Hopkins	7.85
3	**LIVE 34** by James Parsons & Andrew Stirling-Brown	7.73
4	**The Juggernauts** by Scott Alan Woodard	7.44
5	**The Council of Nicaea** by Caroline Symcox	7.17
6	**Singularity** by James Swallow	7.08
7	**Catch-1782** by Alison Lawson	6.99
8	**Unbound: Storm of Angels** by Marc Platt	6.80
9	**The Game** by Darin Henry	6.50
10	**Thicker than Water** by Paul Sutton	6.44
11	**Three's a Crowd** by Colin Brake	5.98
12	**Unregenerate!** by David A McIntee	5.96
13	**Scaredy Cat** by Will Shindler	5.95
14	**Dreamtime** by Simon Forward	4.95

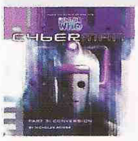
"Crikey! Something I wrote has won the **DWM** poll! Thanks to everyone who voted and thanks to the cast and Steve Foxon for all being just absolutely brilliant. And a real special thank you to Gary Russell for taking a chance on me six years ago – and for giving me the opportunity to write *Doctor Who*!"

JOSEPH LIDSTER
Writer, *Terror Firma*

PAUL McGANN
DOCTOR WHO
TERROR FIRMA

OTHER BIG FINISH AUDIOS

Rank	Title	Average/10
1	**Cyberman 1.3: Conversion** by Nicholas Briggs	7.48
2	**Cyberman 1.2: Fear** by Nicholas Briggs	7.28
3	**Bernice: Lost Museum** by Simon Guerrier	7.20
4	**Gallifrey 2.2: Spirit** by Stephen Cole	7.17
5	**UNIT 1.3: The Longest Night** by Joseph Lidster	7.00
6	**UNIT 1.4: The Wasting** by Iain McLaughlin/Claire Bartlett	6.96
7	**Cyberman 1.1: Scorpius** by Nicholas Briggs	6.81
8	**UNIT 1.2: Snake Head** by Jonathan Clements	6.67
9	**Gallifrey 2.5: Imperiatrix** by Stewart Sheargold	6.59
10	**Bernice: Kingdom of the Blind** by Jacqueline Rayner	6.50
11	**Bernice: Heart's Desire** by David Bailey and Neil Corry	6.43
12	**Gallifrey 2.3: Pandora** by Justin Richards	6.25
13	**Gallifrey 2.1: Lies** by Gary Russell	6.23
14	**Gallifrey 2.4: Insurgency** by Steve Lyons	5.89
15	**Bernice: Masquerade of Death** by Stewart Sheargold	5.67

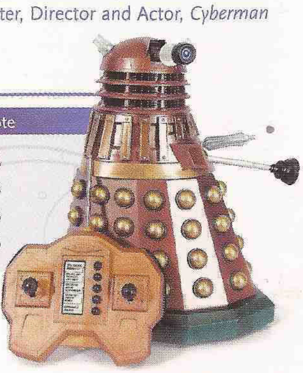


"I'm over the moons of Mondas about this. As with my *Dalek Empires*, *Cyberman* was very much a personal creation. Huge thanks to the late Kit and Gerry and very special thanks to my lovely cast and script editor John Ainsworth who is an inspiration to me. After all my Cyber work on the TV series, I feel as if I've been upgraded by every single generation of Cybermen!"

NICHOLAS BRIGGS Writer, Director and Actor, *Cyberman*

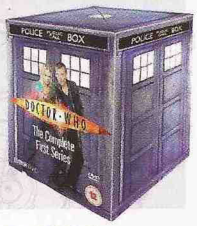
DOCTOR WHO TOYS

Rank	Title	% vote
1	**Remote Control Dalek**	56.0%
2	**Sonic Screwdriver**	22.0%
3	**TARDIS Money Box**	7.3%
	Others	14.7%



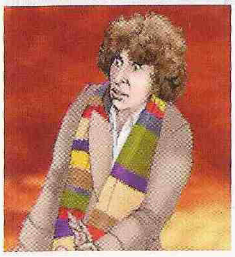
FAVOURITE **DOCTOR WHO** DVD

Rank	Title	% vote
1	The Complete First Series Box Set	32.6%
2	City of Death	21.7%
3	Revelation of the Daleks	15.2%
4	The Mind Robber	11.6%
5	Horror of Fang Rock	8.0%
6	The Claws of Axos	5.8%
7	The Web Planet	5.1%



FAVOURITE DVD **SPECIAL FEATURE**

Rank	Title	% vote
1	Paris in the Springtime (City of Death documentary)	36.3%
2	Terrance Dicks: Fact & Fiction (Horror of Fang Rock)	11.8%
3	Doctor Who Confidential (The Complete First Series Box Set)	7.8%
	Others	44.1%



"It was lovely to be given the opportunity to pay tribute to my favourite writer, and my favourite *Doctor Who* story. If they had asked someone else, I would have moaned endlessly about how I could have done it better. Much as I am loathe to share the credit, I should thank Ed Stradling for cutting out all the rubbish bits of my script."

JONATHAN MORRIS
Writer, *Paris in the Springtime*

MOST WANTED FOR DVD RELEASE

Rank	Title	% vote
1	The War Games	7.7%
2	The Trial of a Time Lord	5.9%
3	Logopolis*	4.8%
4	The Seeds of Doom	4.6%
5	The Dæmons	4.1%
6	The Invasion*	3.8%
7	The Sea Devils	3.6%
=	Survival	3.6%
9	The Time Warrior	3.5%
10	Genesis of the Daleks*	3.3%
11	Castrovalva*	2.8%
12	Terror of the Zygons	2.6%
13	The Christmas Invasion*	2.5%
14	Doctor Who and the Silurians	2.3%
15	Greatest Show in the Galaxy	2.1%
16	The War Machines	2.0%
17	The Deadly Assassin	1.9%
=	Kinda	1.9%
19	Destiny of the Daleks	1.8%
=	Day of the Daleks	1.8%
	Others	33.4%

FAVOURITE **BBC AUDIO** RELEASE

Rank	Title	% vote
1	Project: Who?	24.0%
2	Reconstructed: The Power of the Daleks	19.2%
3	The Ice Warriors	12.5%
	Others	44.3%

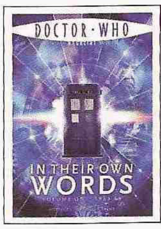
DOCTOR·WHO
Project:WHO?

OVERALL FAVOURITE **MERCHANDISE**

DOCTOR·WHO
Billie Piper

Rank	Title	% vote
1	Doctor Who Magazine (aaaw, thanks!)	20.0%
2	Doctor Who 'classic' DVD range	18.3%
3	Remote Control Dalek	15.6%
4	The Complete First Series Box Set	13.9%
5	Big Finish audios	6.1%
	Others	26.1%

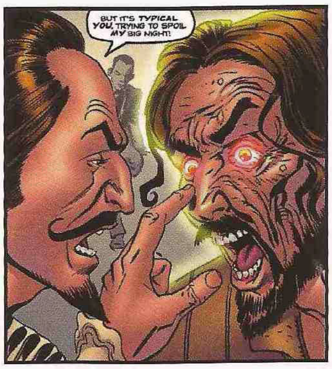
FAVOURITE **DWM** ISSUE



Rank	Title	% vote
1	DWM Special: In Their Own Words – Vol 1	12.0%
2	DWM Special: The Series One Companion	11.4%
3	DWM 364 (Xmas preview, Billie interview)	11.1%
4	DWM 363 (Farewell to the Ninth Doctor)	9.9%
5	DWM 352 (We've Regenerated!)	9.4%
	Others	46.2%

FAVOURITE **COMIC STRIP**

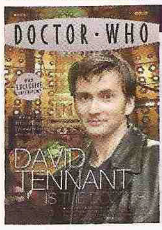
Rank	Title	Average/10
1	**A Groatsworth of Wit** by Gareth Roberts and Mike Collins	8.14
2	**The Cruel Sea** by Robert Shearman and Mike Collins	8.11
3	**The Love Invasion** by Gareth Roberts and Mike Collins	7.68
4	**Art Attack!** by Mike Collins	6.75


BUT IT'S TYPICAL YOU, TRYING TO SPOIL MY BIG NIGHT!

"Glad to hear *Groatsworth* has won – I enjoyed drawing all of the Eccleston adventures but this one really felt like it was truly of the Eccleston 'era'. Ambitious (could you imagine the budget-busting sets and special effects if they'd filmed it?) and told with heart, it showed the fine humour and righteous anger of his Doctor. That said my favourite part was probably Rose having her own little *Carry On* adventure with young Shakespeare. For me it was also the story where I really felt I'd nailed his likeness, ironic as it was the last story featuring him!"

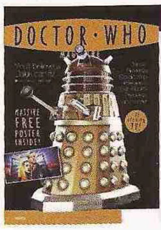
MIKE COLLINS
Artist, *A Groatsworth of Wit*

FAVOURITE **DWM** INTERVIEW



Rank	Title	% vote
1	David Tennant (DWM 359)	27.4%
2	Russell T Davies (DWM 359-360)	21.4%
3	Billie Piper (DWM 364)	17.9%
4	Janet Fielding (DWM 353)	10.3%
5	Steven Moffat (DWM 364)	5.1%
	Others	17.9%

FAVOURITE **DWM** SPECIAL FEATURE



Rank	Title	% vote
1	Diary of a Dalek (Nicholas Briggs on set)	20.5%
2	Fantastic! (Christopher Eccleston tribute)	19.3%
3	The Brand of Fear (Rubbish merchandise)	13.3%
4	Girls Allowed (Girls and Doctor Who)	13.2%
5	Class of 2005 (Kids watching Doctor Who)	6.0%
	Others	27.7%

FAVOURITE **DWM** REGULAR FEATURE

Rank (last year)	Title	Average/10
1 (1)	Gallifrey Guardian	8.91
2 (3)	Production Notes	8.15
3 (–)	New Series Previews	8.14
4 (2)	Off the Shelf	8.13
5 (4)	The Time Team	7.81
6 (5)	The Comic Strip	7.53
7 (–)	After Image	7.51
8 (10)	The Fact of Fiction	7.43
9 (6)	Further Adventures	7.23
10 (9)	Archive Extra	7.13
11 (8)	DWMail	7.05
12 (–)	Matrix Data Bank	6.73
13 (–)	Public Image	6.17

GALLIFREY GUARDIAN
TIME FOR A CHANGE!

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* Now released or scheduled for release shortly.

GALAXY FOUR 10th ANNIVERSARY

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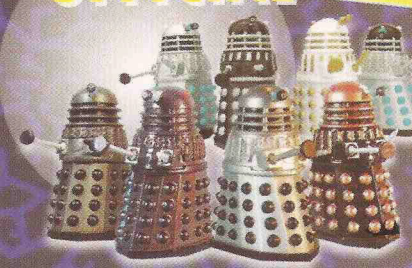

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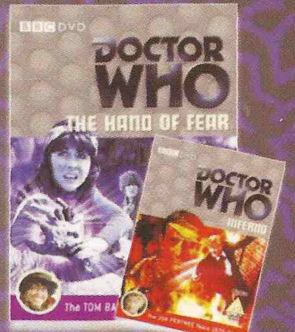

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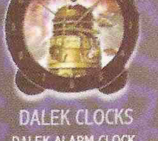

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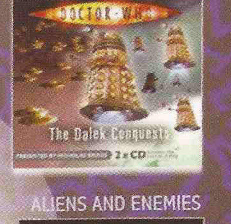

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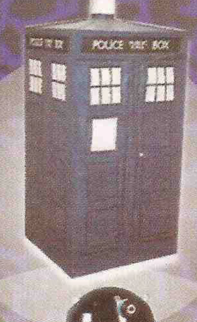

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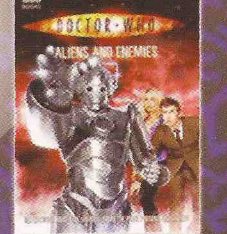

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OFF THE SHELF

DVDs, BOOKS, CDs, TOYS: THE WORLD OF **DOCTOR WHO** IN REVIEW.

Illustration **BEN WILLSHER**

INFERNO

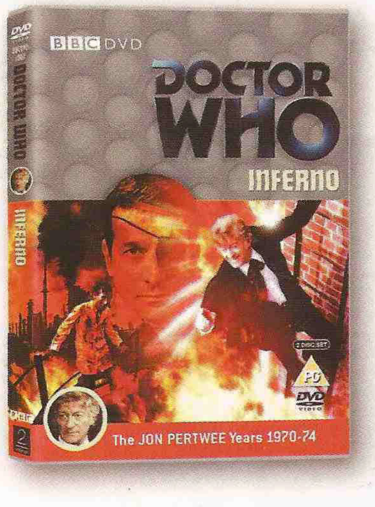
DVD BBC DVD / 2|entertain | **BY** Don Houghton | **PRICE** £19.99 | **OUT** Now

INFERNO COMES TO DVD IN SPLENDID quality, having undergone the same picture conversion process as last year's *The Claws of Axos* release. Its timing couldn't be better, either. Released in the wake of the recent Cybermen two-parter, *Inferno* is *Doctor Who*'s original 'parallel world' story.

Set within a massive drill-head facility that's attempting to penetrate the Earth's crust to tap a new energy source beneath it, Don Houghton's story opens with the Doctor already based at the project and annoying its leader, Professor Stahlman, by using power from its nuclear reactor to run experiments on the TARDIS console. Following a murder that brings UNIT to the scene, and the discovery of a green slime at the drill-head that turns those who touch it into vicious sub-humans – Primords – the TARDIS accidentally slips the Doctor into a parallel universe where he discovers that *in* this world the project is a lot more advanced and that its drilling will destroy the planet. To complicate things further, the project is led by ruthless alter-egos of the Doctor's old UNIT friends – Section Leader Elizabeth Shaw and the Brigadier, now Brigade Leader, a cruel Mussolini type complete with eyepatch and an evil-looking scar across his face.

Although from the brave new world of the early Earth-based Jon Pertwee era, *Inferno* begins with a set-up that could have come from any number of Patrick Troughton stories: a huge gleaming control room presided over by a stroppy project leader – Olaf Pooley in a marvellously bad-tempered turn. For a while, the Troughton similarities continue. The whole drill-head project recalls the deep sea drilling of *Fury from the Deep*, just as the green slime, with its dehumanising qualities, resembles the strange foam-like substance of the weed. And like *The Ice Warriors*, there's a lot of to-ing and fro-ing over the Base's central computer, as Stahlman sabotages it to stop its findings inhibiting his progress.

Inferno unfolds, however, not as a 'base under siege' story but as a look at what things would be like if the Doctor wasn't around to save the day.



Although the Doctor himself is rarely off the screen – challenging Stahlman over the computer and getting involved in a couple of well-directed rooftop chases – his concern with repairing the TARDIS means that he is curiously uninvolved in the drill-head's problems, and is quite prepared to leave everyone to sort it out for themselves.

Essentially, *Inferno*'s parallel world theme means that Houghton's story virtually gets away with telling the same story twice – at least as far as the problems encountered at the drill-head. Any serious sense of the story repeating itself, however, is alleviated by the sheer pace of the production and the novelty of the cast playing alternative versions of their real world characters. Nicholas Courtney clearly relishes his role as the Brigade Leader. The thin smile he wears when he first meets the Doctor not only speaks of the character's cruelty but also how much Courtney is enjoying playing him. Naturally it's the strong scenes that stand out – his interrogation of the Doctor as a spy, for example – but perhaps even more impressive is Courtney's performance when, in facing the destruction of his world, the Brigade Leader cracks up and is revealed as a desperate coward out only to save himself.

Good characterisation runs through all the parallel world characters, Caroline John's Section Leader Elizabeth Shaw receives a much better slice of the action than her real-world equivalent. The glimmers of their real-world personalities is a nice touch too, Elizabeth Shaw recalling that she once thought about becoming a scientist, and the 'alternative' drill expert Greg and Project Assistant Petra, a much starchier pair, but still with clear signs of attraction to each other shared by their counterparts.

Director Douglas Camfield does a fantastic job with the parallel Earth material, shooting the project's refinery-like location in a shaky hand-held style that makes it feel appropriately different and unsettling, a mood enhanced by some equally eerie music from Delia Derbyshire. Shot through a fiery heat-haze, *Inferno*'s final few episodes feel genuinely apocalyptic, the short scene of bodies slumped in the burning atmosphere reminiscent of the nuclear war drama *Threads*.

There are a few production niggles: the 'shaggy dog' make-up of the Primords particularly, but overall *Inferno* is a triumph – tense and dramatic, with Jon Pertwee at his absolute best. Although long at seven episodes, written with the destruction of a parallel Earth and the view that people under pressure will shout a lot, Houghton's story is certainly never dull – or, come to that, quiet.

"*Inferno* looks at what things would be like if the Doctor wasn't around to save the day."

DVD EXTRAS

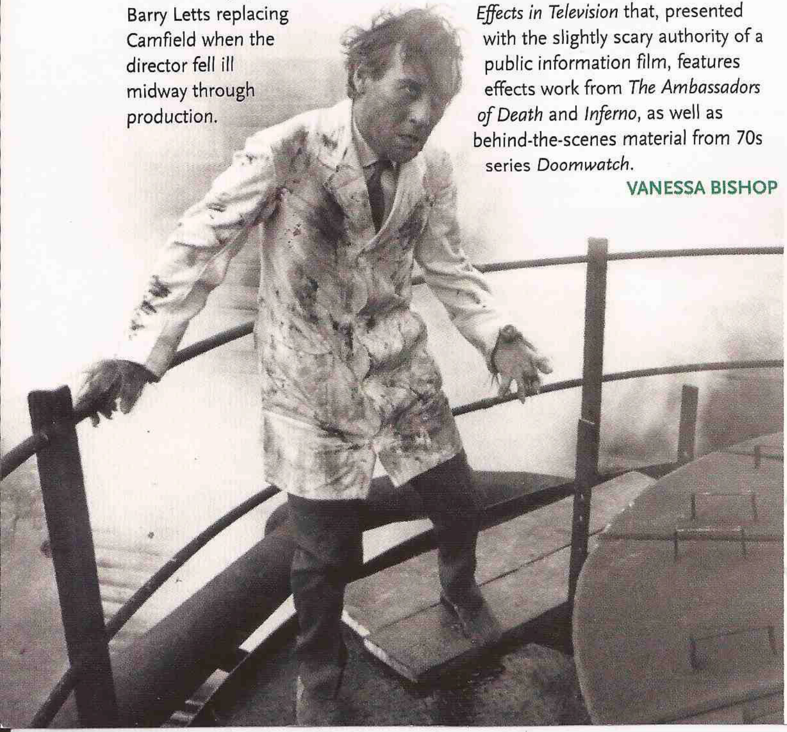
Can You Hear the Earth Scream? covers *Inferno*'s production. Steve Broster's film is a bit no-thrills compared to some – talking heads against a black background – but in a focus on the story's stunt work, it makes some good use of a little-seen 1970s documentary, *Dying for a Living*, in which familiar faces from *Doctor Who*'s stunt team sit around talking about their injuries in a way that recalls the scar-comparing scene in *Jaws*. Elsewhere the documentary avoids the big question over Barry Letts replacing Camfield when the director fell ill midway through production. As Nicholas Courtney notes, the change is seamless – was Letts working off-the-cuff, or working from pre-planned notes from Camfield who more than once is described as "meticulous"?

The UNIT Family: Part One, also produced by Broster, covers stories from *The Web of Fear* to *Inferno*, and is a fair examination of the pros and cons of an Earth-based *Doctor Who*. There is good material from Terrance Dicks, who talks about the format's limitations and how he had argued against it, but some rather less interesting long-winded anecdotes from John Levene. Overall, the variety of material and the interesting visual style – including a lively ITC-inspired title sequence – makes this the better of the two main features, and with *The Invasion* also under discussion, this is a well-timed appreciation of some of Camfield's best work.

Barry Letts takes the lead on the commentary that, with Dicks and Courtney, is an informative and largely enjoyable affair save for the inserted sections from John Levene, who is embarrassingly sentimental and self-important. I lost patience when, speaking of the Primord Benton, he says "I decided to play it like Richard the Third."

Of the other 'Extras' – which include a deleted scene with Pertwee providing the voice of a radio announcer, and the actor's specially-shot introductions for *The Pertwee Years* VHS – the most interesting is the short 1970s industry feature *Visual Effects in Television* that, presented with the slightly scary authority of a public information film, features effects work from *The Ambassadors of Death* and *Inferno*, as well as behind-the-scenes material from 70s series *Doomwatch*.

VANESSA BISHOP



THE SETTLING

AUDIO DRAMA Big Finish | **BY** Simon Guerrier | **PRICE** £14.99 | **OUT** Now

HOT ON THE HEELS OF LAST month's *The Kingmaker* comes another historically-themed Big Finish audio adventure. This time it's the Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex who are caught up in Oliver Cromwell's subjugation of Ireland, and the sieges of Drogheda and Wexford. But whereas last month's story played Richard III's reign of terror for laughs, writer Simon Guerrier uses the backdrop of war-torn Ireland as a wringer through which he passes the TARDIS crew, confronting them with Cromwell's atrocities and their justifications, and forcing Hex to consider the impact of his travels through time.

Using a standard device of flip-flopping between the present and the past, Guerrier initially threatens to fall back on all the clichés of science-fiction storytelling. Having Hex moping inside the TARDIS while Ace spouts homilies like 'you can't undo what's been done', the listener's primed to expect an inferior episode of *Lost*. Fortunately, the plot develops in a rather more interesting direction, with Hex cut off from his friends and stumbling into the fine balancing act of an association with the unpredictable Cromwell. Philip Olivier does well at conveying Hex's desperation, and his feckless attempts to fit into the brutal time period. Meanwhile, Ace is as subtle as a bull in a china shop, making the leader of Wexford suspicious of Cromwell's motives. Her stridency is in stark contrast to Hex's caution, although ultimately the tables are turned as Hex throws caution to the wind and rallies the people of Wexford to oppose Cromwell while Ace merely watches.

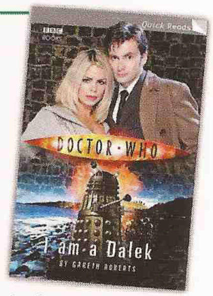
As Cromwell, *Casualty*'s Clive Mantle sounds disconcertingly like the Sixth Doctor: all bluff joviality and sudden bouts of bile. A firm believer in Providentialism, thinking that his actions were directed by God's will, Cromwell remains a controversial character, something that Guerrier works with to present a man who honestly feels that his actions, however bloody, are justified. Cromwell's argument that the massacres at Drogheda and Wexford are defensible because they will discourage further resistance and thus save thousands of lives is the same kind of logic as that behind the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It's an argument that is disputed by the Doctor, who only has

I AM A DALEK

QUICK READS BOOK BBC Books | **BY** Gareth Roberts | **PRICE** £2.99 | **OUT** Now

WHEN THE DOCTOR AND ROSE set course for the moon, it's a bit of a come-down for Rose to arrive instead in an English country pub – and things only get worse when she sees a young woman who's just been run over get up apparently without a bruise. Meanwhile, the Doctor is more concerned by the familiar pepperpot shape that's just been uncovered in an archaeological dig. Not surprisingly, these events are connected, and before long the Doctor has to bargain with a very-much-alive Dalek for the future of the Earth.

Gareth Roberts is no stranger to short and snappy adventures – he has written the recent 60-second *Tardisodes*, as well as the interactive episode *Attack of the Graske*. As such, he's the perfect choice to pen this latest Tenth Doctor story which, apart from being a svelte *Doctor Who* book, is part of the *Quick Reads* initiative that's designed to provide fast-paced, bite-sized books for infrequent readers.



Roberts' previous *Doctor Who* books felt rather like novelisations of unmade TV stories, and *I Am a Dalek* is no exception. It is structured like a TV episode complete with some great action sequences – for example, the Doctor using a demolition ball to knock the Dalek off a cliff – and some scares, such as the Dalek pursuing

"Roberts structures *I Am a Dalek* like a TV episode, with some great action sequences."

to point to the piles of corpses to expose its flaws. That's not to say that the Doctor has all the answers, though. As Hex point out, things don't turn out better simply because the Doctor turns up.

Where the Doctor does make things better is in his focus on individual people. He spends most of this story delivering the pregnant and widowed Mary Fitzgerald of a healthy baby boy, saving her life, and inspiring Dr Goddard to help found the Royal Society. Sylvester McCoy is at his best here, when he's given plenty of realistic and refreshingly technobabble-free dialogue.

Rather than simply telling the story of Cromwell's Irish wars, Guerrier uses *The Settling* to make general points about conflict – in Cromwell's references to the divine guiding hand we might glimpse Tony Blair's statement that only God could judge him for the invasion of Iraq, and in Sinnot's dealings with Cromwell is something of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler. Whether or not this is intentional, *The Settling* is a refreshingly intelligent, layered play.

MATT MICHAEL

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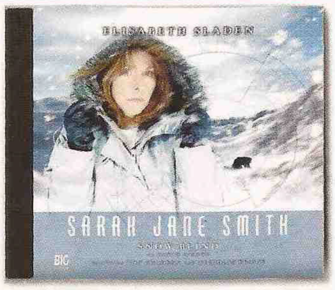
the Doctor up a lift shaft. However, there are also some character moments that add depth. The Doctor is impressed by the archaeologist Frank Openshaw – so much so that he bends the laws of time just like he did for Chip and Cassandra in *New Earth*, to repay Frank's courage. Kate Yates, knocked down and resurrected as she runs for a bus, is economically but effectively presented as a very down-to-earth character, so that her possession by the Dalek factor is all the more poignant. Even the Dalek has a proper character – the Doctor says he can play it like a fiddle, but the Dalek can do just the same to him.

By approaching the book as though he's adapting a 45-minute TV episode, Roberts makes sure that the story is a perfect fit for its 104 pages, coming across neither as a cut-down novel nor a long short story. Obviously, *I Am a Dalek* doesn't have the space to develop a complex plot, and there are only five characters of any significance. It isn't, nor is it meant to be, a substitute for the full-length novels. What it is is a quick-moving and satisfying book that fulfils its *Quick Reads* remit while entertaining us fans at the same time.

MATT MICHAEL

SARAH JANE SMITH: SNOW BLIND

AUDIO DRAMA Big Finish | **BY** David Bishop | **PRICE** £10.99 | **OUT** Now



AT THE END OF THE PREVIOUS *Sarah Jane Smith* audio, *Buried Secrets* [see **DWM** 368], Sarah was going to head out to join her new friend Will Sullivan's expedition in Antarctica. *Snow Blind* picks up as Sarah and Josh journey to the remote, ex-Soviet Nikita Base and discover that all is definitely not well.

Having complained that *Buried Secrets* focused too much on setting up a four-play cycle than telling a strong self-contained plot, it pleased this reviewer no end to hear a straightforward, well-paced mystery story. The ongoing plot threads are clearly there – from the opening news report on the continuing saga of the first tourist space flights and the theft of some nuclear weapon blueprints to the climactic pronouncements from the Crimson Chapter's Keeper – but they're well integrated into a play that can be understood and enjoyed even without the comprehensive recap Big Finish has kindly included.

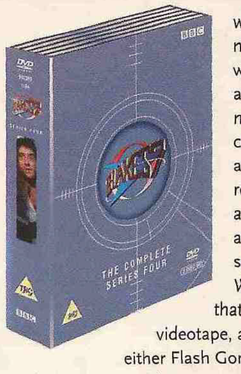
Despite this, there's a slight staleness about *Snow Blind* that's perhaps because at times it feels like a trawl through Sarah's back story. After all, it's not as though she hasn't been temporarily blinded before, and she even comments on her previous Antarctic adventure.

Ultimately, Sarah doesn't really discover anything – she just turns up at Nikita Base and events unfold around her. She acts as a sounding board to the protagonists and plays almost no role in unmasking a potentially earth-shattering conspiracy. She might have retired, but on the evidence here Sarah has all the journalistic instincts of a strawberry. As a result, and in spite of some decent moments, *Snow Blind* ends up slushy.

MATT MICHAEL

BLAKE'S 7: THE COMPLETE FOURTH SERIES

DVD BBC DVD / 2|entertain | **WRITTEN BY** CHRIS BOUCHER, TANITH LEE et al | **PRICE** £44.99 | **OUT** Now



RECEIVED WISDOM HAS IT THAT Series Four of *Blake's 7* is a camp and tacky epilogue. In fact it's mainly just frustrating, containing some of the best and worst episodes of the entire run.

Following the destruction of the Liberator and the off-screen death of Cally, Avon and co are stranded on the planet Terminal. But not for long, as by the end of the first episode they've got a new ship, Scorpio, with all the abilities of the old one but sadly none of its style. Scorpio looks like the set from one of those Saturday morning children's shows where the presenters pretend to be in space. Apparently it was meant to look like the Nostromo in *Alien*. Oh dear. There's also a new human crewmember – female gunslinger Soolin, a thankless part enlivened considerably by Glynis Barber – and a new computer, the obsequious Slave. The crew must face the rapidly re-expanding Federation, with Servalan very confusingly – and bizarrely – rising through the ranks again under the name of Commissioner Sleer, disguised cunningly in feathers and industrial strength eye-shadow that makes her look like Marc Almond. And she now travels through space in what appears to be a motel reception.

The first half of the season is undeniably dafter than what went before, with space Hell's Angels (hideously dated satire in 1981!), a headless android and the all-time-low that is *Animals*, in which Dayna is menaced by some Muppets and falls in love with a seedy old man. All of the cast but Vila now talk like Paul Darrow for some reason, and Paul Darrow decides to outdo them by being even more like Paul Darrow than ever before. Avon seems to have developed a paranoid psychosis along with a quite staggeringly high bouffant.

But then, from the seventh episode onwards, something rather wonderful happens. The new format begins to work, and we get a run of seven brilliant scripts. Tanith Lee's *Sand* is an evocative exploration of Servalan's character, as she is stranded on a deadly planet with Tarrant, with Pacey and Pearce bringing credibility to a very unlikely doomed romance. *Gold* is one of the all-time greats, a meticulously plotted heist story with several clever twists. Robert Holmes' *Orbit* is a fetid black comedy, with Servalan plotting alongside power-mad bisexual Egrorian (*Coronation Street*'s John Savident on typically restrained form) to dupe Avon and Vila. *Assassin* features Richard Hurndall in the role that brought him to the attention of John Nathan-Turner when recasting William Hartnell for *The Five Doctors*, and is a bit of a riot.

Sadly, though, the outstanding character work seen in the previous series is severely curtailed. Avon and Servalan only get to meet twice – Chris Boucher found their relationship 'unrealistic' apparently, which suggests he was not as infallibly astute as we thought – and Tarrant and Vila are rather negatively portrayed as a credulous womaniser and a maudlin drunk respectively. There's also a return to the wobbly aesthetic of the second series with a lot of *Star Wars*-style 'action-wipes' that look terrible on videotape, and costumes that are either Flash Gordon or Julian Clary.

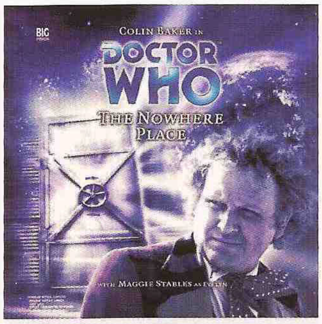
The new 'space gangsters'/*Firefly* format desperately needed another series, to bed itself in and to resolve the Sleer plot satisfactorily. Unfortunately BBC management decreed otherwise, and the series' undoubtedly brilliant two-part finale – in which everything that could go wrong does go wrong for the crew – feels like too much too soon. *Warlord* is a great script let down by truly dire direction and design, but Boucher's finale *Blake* sees the final return of the series' titular revolutionary in much-altered circumstances on Soolin's lawless homeworld. Shamefully we never find out what happened to Servalan, but the final episode remains unforgettable, with blind fate closing in on everybody.

Nowadays, most mainstream TV drama tends to be life-affirming, in case someone in Nantwich gets upset and turns over. The ending of *Blake's 7* reminds us that life isn't always that uplifting; it can be messy, unfair. Which for a gloriously cheap sci-fi adventure that always teetered between pulp and profound is no small achievement.

GARETH ROBERTS

AUDIO ADVENTURES

PREVIEWS OF THE LATEST
DOCTOR WHO AUDIO DRAMAS



AUDIO DRAMA Big Finish
RELEASED July 2006
FEATURING The Sixth Doctor and Evelyn Smythe
SETTING The outer solar system in the year 2197 – and a steam train, England, 1952...

STARRING

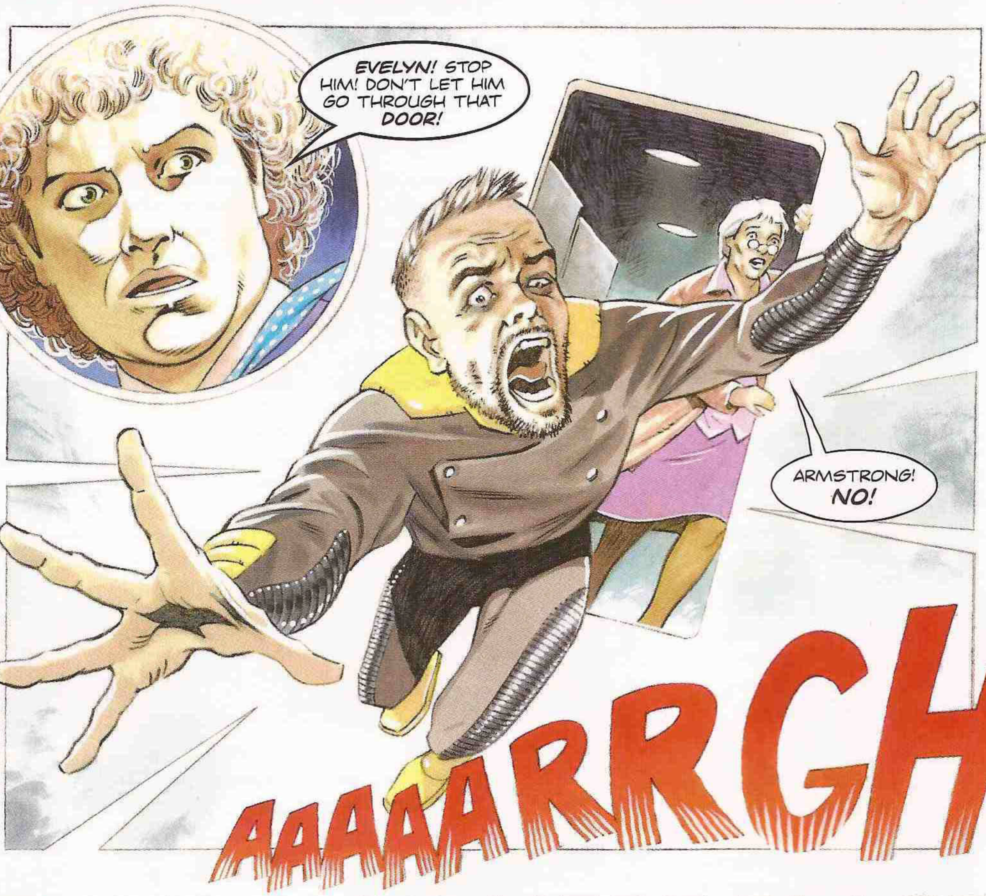
The Doctor	COLIN BAKER
Evelyn Smythe	MAGGIE STABLES
Capt Tanya Oswin	MARTHA COPE
Exec Officer Moore	JOHN SCHWAB
Ops Control	BENJAMIN RODDY
Armstrong	ANDREW WISHER
Palmer	JOHN KILLORAN
Trevor Ridgely	NICHOLAS BRIGGS
O'Keef	STEPHEN CRITCHLOW
Hayman	PHILIP WOLFF
Maxerly	BEN RODDY
Master-at-Arms	ANDREW FETTES

DIRECTOR: Nicholas Briggs

Travelling to Earth, the Doctor is shaken by a deep discord. He and Evelyn land on the fighter carrier Valiant where, among the outer planets, Captain Oswin protects the solar system. Like the mythical sirens, whatever unsettled the Doctor is luring her crew to their doom. But there's no siren: merely a ghostly bell and an impossible door. What's to fear on the Valiant? And why does it involve an almost-deserted train 250 years previously?

▼ *Actor, writer and director: the multi-talented Nicholas Briggs.*

▶ *Left to right: Martha Cope (Oswin), Colin Baker (the Doctor), Maggie Stables (Evelyn) and John Schwab (Moore).*


EVELYN! STOP HIM! DON'T LET HIM GO THROUGH THAT DOOR!
ARMSTRONG! NO!
AAAAARRGH

THE NOWHERE PLACE

Written by NICHOLAS BRIGGS | Preview by MARK WYMAN | Illustration by MARTIN GERAGHTY

"I LIKE THE GRAND SCALE, EVEN when there's only a few characters," says Nick Briggs. He's giving a flavour of his first audio for Big Finish's regular *Doctor Who* range since 2003. "There was a family joke about taking me to the cinema as a kid, as I'd always ask: 'Is it an epic?' I wanted to see armies marching! To have a drama in the same room all along is my idea of a nightmare. The pace of storytelling in the new TV series is a factor too. When I started writing *The Nowhere Place*, I thought 'Four episodes? That's too long!' So I decided to do two stories which link back together."

Briggs speaks about the TV series with some authority – he's the voice of the Daleks, the Cybermen and even the Nestenes. But interviewing Nick is different from other Big Finish writers, since he's also his own director, editor and composer. Does he mentally go through all those crafts when writing? "I certainly imagine how it's going to sound, as I'll be designing that, whereas other writers might feel they were denying a sound designer any creativity. For me it's the most fun, doing it from the ground up – and getting to be in it as well."

Indeed, Briggs is playing a clever Trevor here. Is it refreshing not to have a monster's voice? "I love being Daleks and Cybermen, especially venting frustration as the Daleks, but it's nice not to scream *all* the time. I'm playing Trevor because when I was reading this through to time it, I started forming solid opinions on how to play him. If I'd cast another actor, I'd be riding their back constantly, going 'No, like *this*!'"

There's a tingly coincidence for Colin Baker here. At the March recording, his Sixth Doctor meets Briggs' stranger on a train, just before Baker started a theatre tour of... *Strangers on a Train*! Moreover, "The first time I acted with Nick," Baker recalls, "was on his story *In Memory Alone*" – a BBV video with The Stranger, in 1993. "Nick played a train passenger in a suit, as he does here! There's a real synchronicity." Now, Colin, your Doctor seems unusually rattled here.. "Oh, I'd say really frightened. Nick told me this started with a ghost story notion, but it isn't about little shapes floating before you," explains Baker. "It has two settings; one in space in 2197, the other on a train in 1952. They are, you'll be delighted to know, connected."

"One inspiration," Briggs points out, "was Colin himself talking about his Doctor having a fundamental sense of the rightness of the Universe. So here the Sixth Doctor starts feeling 'This is all wrong!', and since he's so strong and bold, let's have him deal with being *really* scared. There's a lot of avoidance behaviour, until Evelyn catches him off-guard." Did Briggs always intend two such different settings? "I thought, 'How would the Doctor solve this? He'd identify the problem from the past.'"

Briggs understandably had some writer's block on this, which another writer solved. "It was Rob Shearman, whose work I love," explains Briggs. The pivotal object in *The Nowhere Place* came from his *Dalek*-scripting friend. "I'd been commissioned to

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write a spooky but futuristic story, but my Dad had just died," Briggs recalls. "I wanted to write, but after an emotional shock like that all kinds of things happen. So, feeling in a creative vacuum, I told Rob, 'Look, spooky stories are usually left unresolved, but I want things explained properly'. Rob generously said, 'Here's a starting-point for free; what about if, on a spaceship, there's a door... It should not be there, but people are drawn to it and no-one knows why?' So I replied, 'Yes, and what if there's something that only people going to the door hear – a telephone, maybe?'"

The following week, Briggs watched *The Empty Child*, and Steven Moffat's use of a spooky phone ringing caused a rethink. Still, he promises that, "The noise of the Nowhere Place will be as terrifying as I can make it. It's the feeling of being alone in a supposedly haunted house and really nervous. I've been telling the cast that, when it draws someone in, it's like an invisible hand tugging at your very soul..."

> "I love being the Daleks and the Cybermen – but it's nice not to have to scream *all* the time..."

Briggs' main guest casting here was solved after working on *Bad Wolf* with Martha Cope's Controller. Despite the Daleks exterminating her, Cope wanted to work with Briggs again. "We were on a train –again! – after a fan signing in Worcester," she recalls, "when I got Nick drunk enough to agree to using me..." So you demanded a part, Martha? "Well, I'd never done an audio play before."

As Briggs recalls it, "After that signing, we had quite a few drinks and Martha suggested upgrading to first class. You should have seen the looks we got in that carriage! She shamelessly kept telling me her agent's name, so I kind of wrote Captain Oswin with her in mind. Martha's quite unassuming, so it's not what she normally plays, but I'd definitely work with her again."

Oswin doesn't suffer fools gladly, doesn't she, Martha? "She's permanently pre-menstrual! She's sarcastic and dislikes anything straying from the path she knows," Cope elaborates. But the unknown is what Oswin ends up valiantly facing. "I don't often get to play a shouty role with lots of fighters around me. It's usually a victim of domestic violence." Plus, Cope needn't spend all day being strung up in this studio. "To play the Controller took three-and-a-half hours in make-up, an hour getting into the wires and five hours up there. Then people would forget about me and film somewhere else!"

Being the daughter of *Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)* star Kenneth Cope meant Martha knows about fan affection for fantasy series. "Yes, my Dad goes to conventions too. He was in *Warriors' Gate* (1981) with Tom Baker when I was growing up, so he got me Tom's autograph then, and K9's. I still have the plastic watch that Dad's character, Packard, wore," Cope realises. "Could I sell it for thousands of pounds?" Well, maybe...

So, does being part of TV's *Doctor Who* now give Briggs a different perspective on his audio work? "Well, the difference is between hiring a guy to mend a plug and getting someone to design and build your whole house! On TV, although they give me loads of input, I'm hired for a specific job. I would never want to stop doing the Big Finishes while they're going!" DWM

EVELYN, FOR SOME REASON I DON'T UNDERSTAND, I'M STILL AFRAID...

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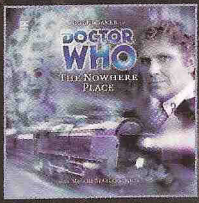

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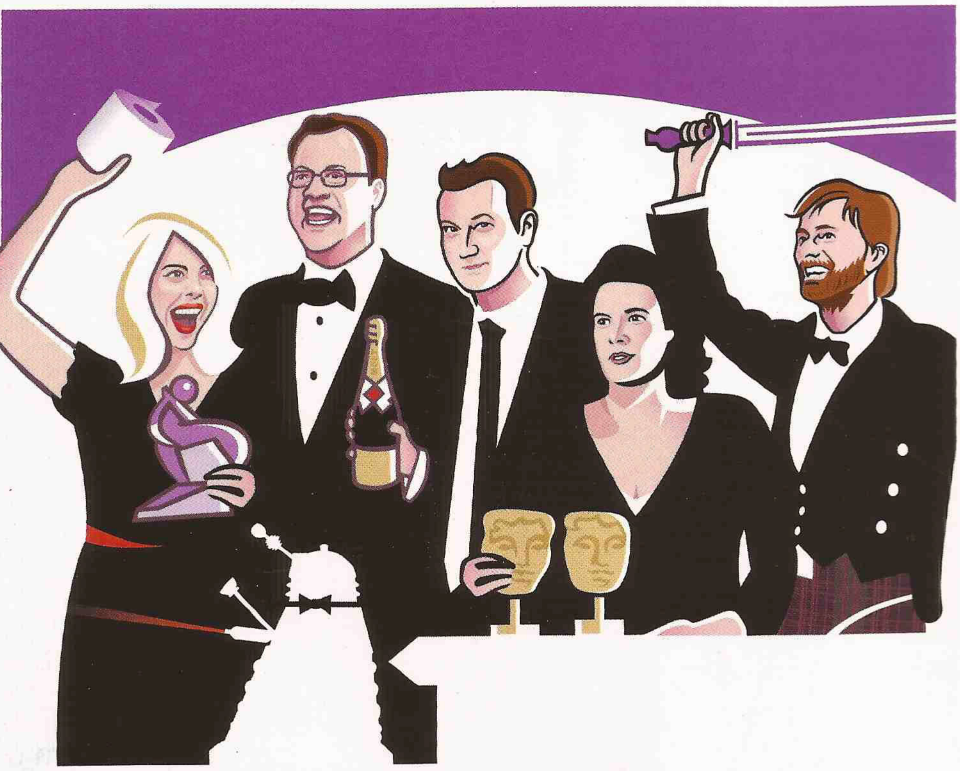
PRODUCTION NOTES

AT THE BAFTAS WITH **RUSSELL T DAVIES!**



GOING FOR GOLD

BE WARNED. IF YOU HATE NAME-dropping, champagne and Cilla, then this ain't for you. The rest of you, all aboard! I'm actually wearing my gold mask as I type, to lead you back in time, back to the BAFTAs, back, *baaack*...

Sunday 7 May 2006. Me and the Fella arrive in London at 1.00. Outside the hotel the crash barriers are up, and members of the public (I'm calling them 'members of the public,' when did that happen?) are already queueing. I sign an autograph for a man in a K9 t-shirt. My autograph is rubbish. There's no T in my real name, but a *Doctor Who* autograph-hunter must want the T, so I try to include it. Go on, you try nonchalantly adding another letter to your signature. It looks like my name exploded. Then inside, and I pace round the bedroom for hours. They told me in February that I'd been given the Dennis Potter Award. Four months of waiting! Anyway, bow tie on, with a political pink shirt, a drink with Julie, Phil and Jane Tranter, then at 6.30, it's into the Great Room at the Grosvenor. 1,400 people packed inside. It begins! Ooh, stars. Des Lynam! Simon Cowell! Matt Lucas and the lovely Kevin! Oh my God, that man from *Desperate Housewives*, what's his name? ('Jesse Metcalfe', cry the gays.) Anne-Marie Duff! Sir Alan! Noel Edmonds! Shane Ritchie says, 'Hello Russell,' he knows me! He must watch *Confidential*. Blimey, Patsy Kensit is ten times more beautiful in real life. Where's Gillian Anderson? Sit down, sit down. The sound is terrible. We can only just hear the stage, so everyone's talking, which makes the stage even harder to hear. Bradley Walsh tells us that comedians call it 'the Room of Death'. I don't remember the first few awards cos I'm thinking speech, speech, speech. Julie says I've gone into the zone. Phil spits champagne all over Jane Tranter. We're hooting. If I was on another table, I'd hate us. Then it's Best Drama Series. Not one of us is expecting to win, I swear, not for a second. There have been rumours for months, and the industry money is on *Bodies*. Kevin Whately announces '*Doctor Who*!' Phil leaps! Like a salmon coming home! (Later on, David Walliams says, 'Your table was gladiatorial.') Up to the stage, holding hands with Billie – Julie's talking, she's in the zone – and I'm just calling across to Davina, 'You were in it!' 'I know! I loved it!' – when the audience starts laughing. 1,400 people laughing, that's the definition of disconcerting. Have I lost my pants? Again? We're the last people to notice that a Dalek has joined us. In black tie. The organisers did ask us for a Dalek, but said it was just for the red carpet. Doh. How naïve were we?! Julie has to improvise with Nick Briggs, although we can't actually hear what he's saying. Offstage, photos, photos, we're gobsmacked, laughing, hooting. Big hugs! A nice woman with an earpiece says that if we win the Pioneer award, can Billie accept it alone? Oh. We are ugly. Ashes in my mouth. Back to the table. Starving. More awards, inaudible. Tracey Emin takes the stage, and holds the room; she's the only person with enough passion to shut everyone up. Extraordinary. God I'm as hungry as The Wire, the meal's not til afterwards. There's a box of BAFTA chocolates, we start eating that. The box itself is made of chocolate. No one believes me, so I start eating the lid. Even then they don't believe me. Do they think I eat lids? Oh, Pioneer Award time – but Billie's gone to the toilet! PANIC. Genuine panic! Honest-to-God convention-anecdote panic. David Jason's started talking. Julie and Jane run, run, run, all hair and heels and frocks, it's like a riot on *Bad Girls*. A rugby tackle in the Ladies'. I'm choking on the lid. Billie comes running back. '*Doctor Who*!' And she's off and we're cheering. Phil's gone upstairs to phone his Mum and is spotted by some *Doctor Who* fans outside the hotel. He goes out and brandishes the BAFTA! 'We won!!' Hands reach out and touch it; a small mute girl talks for the first time. Anna Maxwell Martin wins Best Actress! We all know, secretly, that playing Suki in *The Long Game* swung it for her. Somewhere, a Jagrafess smiles. I'm still waiting. In the zone. David's summoned backstage. Me soon. Oh blimey. Have I got lid on my lips? Then David's on stage, reading out my citation, written by the Academy. This is a strange kind of agony. (There are worse problems to have.) I'm dying to watch my film, but there's a bloody big camera in my face. Then a kiss for the Fella, BAFTA Gay Kiss Shocker, and up to the stage. Zone time. Many infinitely wise words, all cut to shreds on transmission. But since I forget to thank lots of people, I can now say that I *did* mention them, and blame the ITV edit, ha ha. Then it's backstage, press call madness, photos, photos, photos, *Radio Times* – there's Harry Hill! He says he likes us! David, Billie and I are being interviewed by ITV2 when a drunk blonde woman interrupts us. I swear at her, she stumbles away. I nip upstairs to put my Awards in my room, come back down, the lift doors open, there's Jesse Metcalfe! If I find the right words, he will fall in love with me. I say, 'Hiya.' Oh, writers, so clever with words. 'Hiya.' Hey ho. Back to the table, food at last, lamb, lovely, then a pudding which Anthony Cotton calls 'Angel Delight on a Pringle.' Then it's off to the ballroom, music, chat, schmooze, dance all night with Cilla. Brown, not Black. And so to bed.

> "NOT ONE OF US IS EXPECTING TO WIN, NOT FOR A SECOND..."

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Right. That's enough of that nonsense. Back to work.

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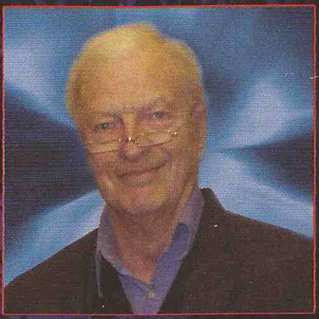

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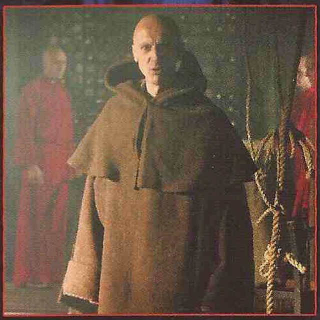

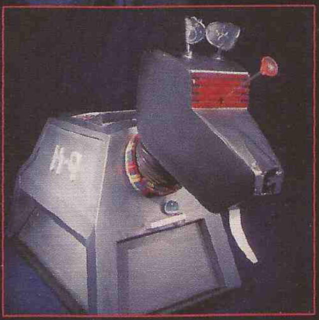

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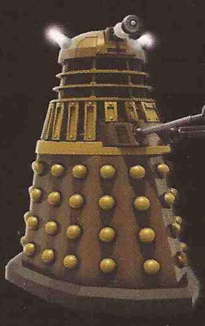

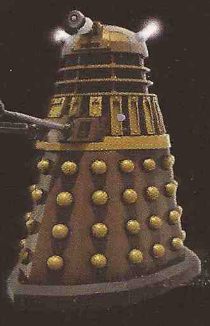

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